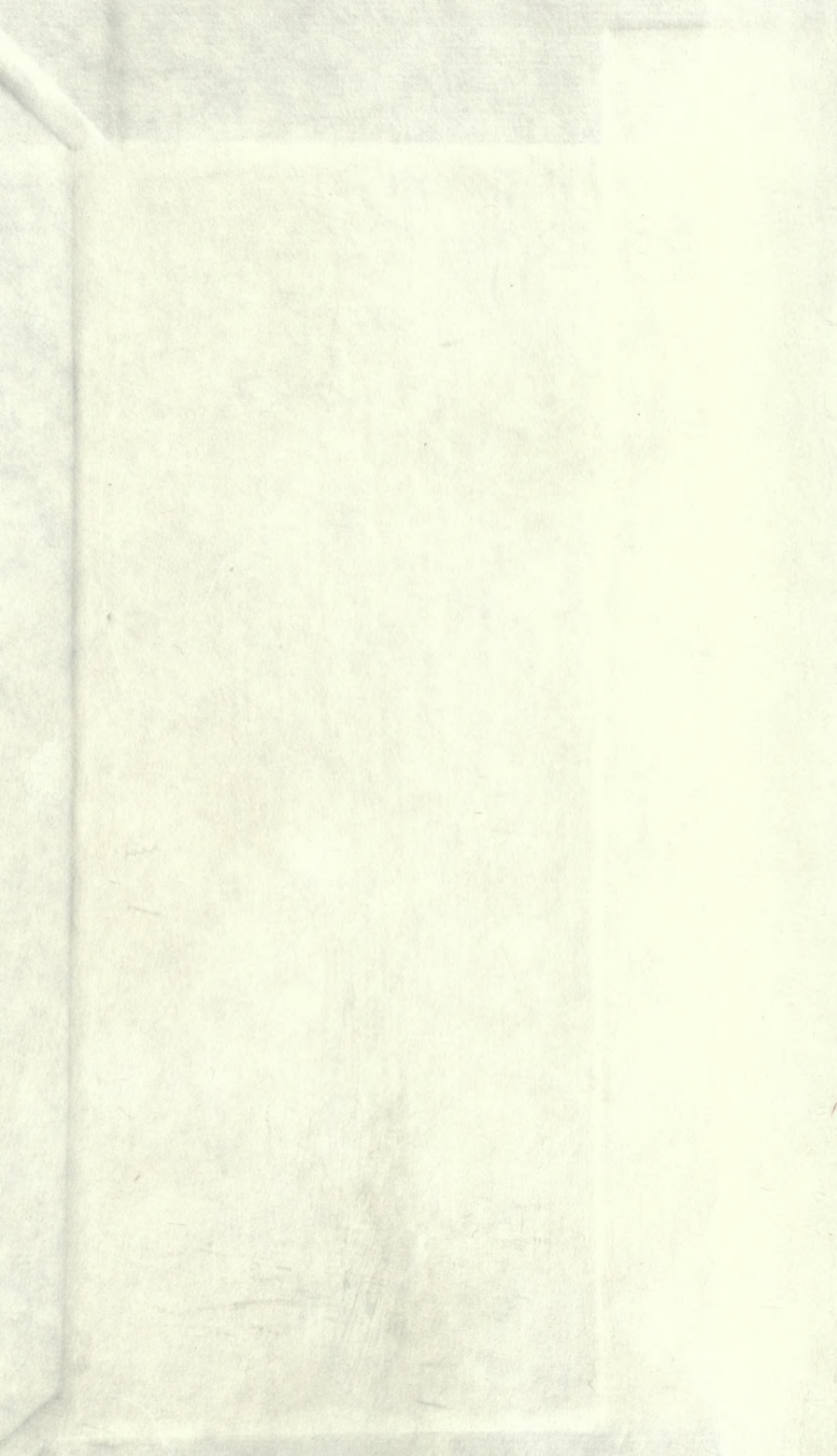




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PARLIAMENTARY REMINISCENCES
AND REFLECTIONS
1886—1906

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

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AND
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PARLIAMENTARY REMINISCENCES AND REFLECTIONS

1886—1906

BY THE RT. HON. LORD GEORGE HAMILTON
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P R E F A C E

THE kindly reception by the public of the first half of my Parliamentary Reminiscences induces me to complete them. The period under review is full of incidents affecting the career and reputation of public celebrities. The fact that I was in the inner ring of politics during the whole of this period gave me exceptional opportunities of examining and gauging the veracity of legends which have sprung up and wound themselves round the names of certain distinguished men of this epoch. These versions have been generally accepted by the public as a true record of motive, decision and consequences. I have endeavoured to disentangle myth from fact and assumption from evidence. I am well aware that in so writing I must necessarily come up against preconceived ideas based either on prejudice or predilection ; but the facts I narrate are not unfrequently more interesting than the suppositions they supersede.

GEORGE HAMILTON.

LONDON,

November, 1921.

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PARLIAMENTARY REMINISCENCES AND REFLECTIONS

1886—1906

CHAPTER I

THE year 1886 was heralded in by symptoms of exceptional political ferment. The Reform and Redistribution Bills of 1884 had, to a large extent, revolutionised the old machinery and personnel of our electoral system, and the changes effected were in some directions greater than those made by the Reform Bill of 1832. The single-member divisions—the great feature of the redistribution scheme—abolished the huge metropolitan, urban and semi-urban constituencies which under the old system to so large an extent governed and dictated the policy of the past. The agricultural labourers in the rural districts, the lower grades of unskilled labour in the urban districts, were for the first time enfranchised. Their general knowledge and political experience were necessarily of a lower standard than those of the electorate to which they were added. Would they swamp it by views of their own, or were they prepared to affiliate themselves as auxiliaries to the existing party organisations? Time alone could fully answer this question, but at the outset of the change the support given by the new electors to

Lord Salisbury's Government fairly staggered the Gladstonian Party. From the elements of uncertainty which must necessarily be associated with an election on so novel a basis only one certainty in advance was established, viz. the increase of strength which Parnell and his followers would obtain in Ireland from the extension of the franchise. The total number of Home Rulers in the old Parliament was over seventy, and it was a certainty that Parnell would come back with eighty or more followers of his own. The veriest tyro in politics was aware of this certainty. The only doubt was whether the numbers would be eighty or eighty-six. Within such narrow limits only could uncertainty exist as to the future dimensions of the Parnellite Party.

The next question which arose was the use which Parnell would make of this Parliamentary vote. In the Parliament of 1885 there were gradations of opinion and antagonisms amongst the Home Rule Party. A large number of them supported the Government upon questions other than Irish. When they did vote solidly with the Irish extremists, the Government could rely upon obtaining sufficient Conservative support to counteract their temporary defection. But now it was more than probable that Parnell would manipulate his party in such a way as to cause the greatest embarrassment to whatever party was in office unless it would accept his terms, viz. the establishment of a separate Parliament in Dublin. In the long electoral campaign lasting from June to December Irish questions occupied quite a secondary position. The unauthorised programme of Chamberlain and his followers had been the main subject of controversy. The moderate

Liberals such as Hartington, Goschen, James, the Duke of Argyll, Selborne and Childers had not only shied at this programme, but with or without blinkers they absolutely declined to pass it. It was between these two sections of our opponents rather than Tory and Radical that real animosity was displayed. The speeches, addresses and attitude of the whole Liberal Party throughout this lengthened contest all assumed that the general election would give them a substantial majority in the House of Commons over the aggregate votes of the Conservative and Parnellite Parties. No man spoke with more confidence on this point than Gladstone, and he went so far as to say it would not be safe—I think he used the epithet honourable—to deal with the Irish problem if the Liberal Party were not in a position to act independently of the Irish. His chief lieutenant, Harcourt, went a good deal farther in his denunciation of the Irish extremists. These views were largely founded upon the reports made by the Liberal electioneering experts, who told their leaders that the Conservatives would probably come back about 140 in number, but that in no circumstances could their number exceed 200. As I have already stated, when Sir Henry Maine communicated this surmise to me I told him that I thought we could come back about 250 strong. He threw up his hands in astonishment, and said: “If you are approximately right, some funny things will happen.” My calculation was a good one; we came back 249, Parnellites 86, total 335—just half the whole voting power of the House of Commons.

All prospect of returning to office with a homogeneous majority had vanished, and Gladstone had

4 GLADSTONE FLIES HOME-RULE KITE

to acquiesce in this defeat or attempt to obtain a majority either by seducing a certain number of Conservatives from their allegiance or winning the Parnellite support by the acceptance of their programme. He commenced the former operation at once by making, through Arthur Balfour, informal advances as to how far the Conservatives would travel in the direction of Home Rule, at the same time flying the Home-Rule kite through the medium of a provincial Radical journal, the *Leeds Mercury*. Balfour's reply, made with the sanction of Salisbury, convinced Gladstone that he could obtain no support from the Conservative Party in any *volte face* he might make over the repeal of the union between Great Britain and Ireland.

The county of Middlesex—for which I had been representative from 1868 to 1885—had during that period become the largest constituency in the United Kingdom, and under the Redistribution Bill it was subdivided into eight separate single-member divisions. I selected Ealing for my candidature, and after a hot and very rowdy contest was returned by a majority of 1,600. In each of the remaining seven seats we secured a victory by large majorities—a gratifying tribute to the organising power and energy of my old agents and political associations. But the physical strain and expense of organising the immense constituency of Middlesex was continuous and intense, and I could not have sustained it much longer. Those only who have worked a huge constituency can fully realise the amount of time, correspondence and expense entailed, and how the knowledge of these demands choke off the best class of candidate. The strain is much greater on a Conservative than a Radical

member or candidate, as the latter has so many natural allies in the Dissenting, trade and labour organisations, many of whom mechanically throw their influence against the Tory Party. Single-member seats have been, in my judgment, the salvation of moderate and independent politicians, and any attempt—no matter for what ulterior object—to return to vast constituencies with a multiplicity of representatives would but operate prejudicially against the very class of member and candidate the House of Commons most requires.

In the middle of the late general election I had the misfortune to lose my father, who somewhat suddenly succumbed to an attack of jaundice. By his death I lost not only a most kind and considerate parent, but the financial prop of my political career. It was only late in life that he took a prominent part in politics, but he astonished his old associates and his new political colleagues by his ability, powers of speech and rapid appreciation of a difficult or serious task. His early life was one of exceptional and easy-going prosperity. He succeeded at the age of five to his titles and a very large property, and he was in consequence from his earliest years surrounded by associates who, though fond of him, took good care that his expenditure and the amusements in which he indulged were not to their disadvantage. His natural indolence and extraordinary shyness made him much too reliant upon the good offices of his friends. In 1841 he moved, and Lord Dalhousie seconded, the Address to the Queen's Speech in the House of Lords, and the then Prime Minister, Lord Melbourne, described his speech as the best that he had ever heard upon such an occasion. Publicly he did little in the next twenty

6 HIS CHARACTER AND INFLUENCE

years, but during that period his large and increasing family and their manifold activities absorbed much of his time and attention. He was Viceroy of Ireland from 1866 to 1868 and from 1874 to 1876, and it is no exaggeration to say that by his power of speech and administration, by the equipment of his establishment and the selection of his staff, he placed that office upon a higher plane than it had occupied for many years past. Pomp and circumstance form no small ingredients of success in certain public stations of life, but to be effective they must be dissociated from snobbery or ostentation.

The old Duke of Cambridge was a guest of my father, when, as Lord-Lieutenant, he entertained for a fortnight the Prince and Princess of Wales and introduced them to the public life of Ireland. The Duke told me that he was acquainted with all the big courts of Europe, but that he thought my father's establishment and entourage as Viceroy was the best organised and the most comfortable that he had ever known. The Irish like effective display, and as they looked upon my father as an Irishman they took his success and popularity as a personal compliment to themselves. In the north of Ireland he became a great political asset, and he further rendered a good service to the Irish Church by laying down in the first Synod a compromise upon ritual which has since worked exceptionally well.

Though I have had, from my early introduction to official life, the advantage of coming into contact with many brilliant intellects, I never met a quicker brain or a more adaptable vocabulary than those of my father, and this high estimate of his ability would, I think, be endorsed by all who had to transact serious business with him. His death necessitated

my eldest brother's abandoning his candidature for a North Ireland constituency, my youngest brother taking his place. The Parliament of 1885-6 included five brothers: my eldest brother was in the House of Lords, the four other brothers—viz. Claud for Liverpool, Frederic for Manchester, Ernest for North Tyrone and myself for Ealing—were in the Commons. I doubt if ever before five brothers were at the same time Members of Parliament, and the fact that we were so returned was a good proof of the esteem and reputation in which my father's memory and services were held.

Gladstone's popularity in 1886, though he was still the recognised leader of the largest political party in the Commons, was of a very different character from that halo of glory with which he was encircled after his great electoral victory in 1880. In the six years between these two elections he had been tried and had failed. If the election of 1886 had been upon the old electorate, he undoubtedly would not have come back with anything like his present following. The ghastly blunders of his foreign and Egyptian policy, the irreconcilable differences between his platform utterances and official acts, had sunk deep into the minds of the knowledgeable public. Moreover, the moderate or Whig notables in his party were in a mood very different from that of six years back. During that interval they had been under the harrow of the Midlothian programme; they bitterly felt the discredit of the policy in which they had only reluctantly acquiesced and from which they had been unable to dissociate themselves. The recollection of the contumely to which they had been subject from having accepted office under Gladstone made

them chary of subjecting themselves afresh to any ordeal which might prove to be even more repellent to their innate convictions. It was doubtful if, in any circumstances, Hartington, Goschen, Argyll, Selborne, Northbrook or James would again serve under Gladstone; but it was almost certain that if Home Rule were the dominant feature of his policy they would not only decline to support him, but would combine with the Conservatives in opposition to him. John Morley was almost the only prominent Radical who openly advocated upon the platform the establishment of a separate Irish Parliament. He had for some time past been gravitating towards this policy. He wrote a remarkable article in the *Nineteenth Century*, entitled "Irish Revolution and English Radicals." It was the ablest exposition of the question from a Radical point of view that I have ever read, and this is a high compliment, as all active politicians must in the course of this prolonged controversy have read in one way or another many hundreds of speeches and pamphlets. There is one expression which I have always treasured up, in which he advocated decided and prompt action rather than allow the question to drift into "a squalid edition of the Thirty Years' War." He, Morley, stood almost alone amongst Radicals in his frank advocacy of a separate Parliament for Ireland. Not a single member of Gladstone's administration had ventured even to adumbrate such a policy, though there had been a good deal of loose talk about provincial councils and glorified local bodies. If on the Liberal side there was a distrust as to their leader's future course, amongst Conservatives there was more than a sniff of suspicion as to certain transactions during the election and as to the

ALTERNATIVE—RESTORATION OF ORDER 9

measures to be taken to restore the authority of the executive in Ireland. The debates in the ultimate days of the late Parliament upon the Maanstrasna outrage, the disparaging remarks made about Lord Spencer's administration, had not been forgotten by our stalwarts. In the preceding autumn my brother Claud and his colleague Whitley, both members for Liverpool, refused to appear upon the same platform as Churchill, and, notwithstanding all the explanations and pressure brought to bear upon them, they adhered to their refusal. The meeting had to be abandoned, and Churchill found that the following of these two recalcitrant members was too strong to be ignored. If our party was to be kept together, if we were to obtain, so far as Ireland was concerned, the support of the Moderate Liberals, it was necessary that we should at once take adequate measures to vindicate our views and position. Though we were in a hopeless minority if all the Liberal and Parnellite Parties voted together, the antagonisms in the Liberal Party were such that we had only to state our intention to restore authority in Ireland to ensure a permanent schism. What the numbers of the dissenting Liberal minority would be could only be ascertained through the process of debate and division. Salisbury's Government therefore felt justified in meeting Parliament, but any prospect of successfully attracting the Liberal Unionists (chronologically I antedate this designation) must be through the enunciation of a vigorous and sincere attempt to rehabilitate the executive in Ireland.

Carnarvon and Dyke were respectively Lord-Lieutenant and Chief Secretary. They had, for reasons which I have already explained, been selected

10 SMITH BECOMES IRISH SECRETARY

as men well suited to perform in Ireland the delicate functions of a stop-gap administration, but they were not suitable exponents of a policy of vigour or, if necessary, of repression. Independently, however, of this consideration, Carnarvon was not disposed to remain with us. Possessed as he was by a great charm of manner, of eloquence and industry and courage, yet he had a microbe of incurable fidgetiness in his composition. Three times in twenty years did he resign office. There was on his part an inability to weigh or give adequate consideration to influences, however important or pressing they might be, if they were outside the ken of his immediate job. Though loyal and straightforward in all his transactions, he was a constant worry to his colleagues, and at times to his officials. He took charge of the India Office whilst Lord Salisbury was in Constantinople in 1876. I was then Indian Under-Secretary. There happened to be a good many questions that required prompt decision, and, accustomed as we were to Salisbury's virile and prompt intellect, we were driven distracted by the endless queries, alterations and alternatives that beset every important proposition put before him. He was a high-minded and lovable gentleman with strong moral ideals, but not the stamp of man to deal with a crisis or to fall into the team work necessitated by our party system. The resignation of Carnarvon and Dyke necessitated a fresh Irish appointment, and W. H. Smith, with his usual courage and sense of duty, at a moment's notice undertook this unpleasant duty, and he went over to Ireland to report upon the general situation.

During the short time that we had been in office we had done well, considering that, in addition to

our ministerial work, we had the burden upon our shoulders of the general election with an enlarged franchise and Redistribution Bill. Salisbury had extricated us from the Russian embroglio so badly handled by his predecessors and which had brought this country to the brink of war with Russia. The trend of his speeches and the language of his despatches were felt to be worthy of a big nation, and our relations both with our over-sea dominions and foreign powers had perceptibly improved. Beach had proved a capable Chancellor of the Exchequer and Leader of the House of Commons. At the War Office and Admiralty, Smith and I had initiated reforms which were not only good in themselves but met with the approval of the heads of the two Services as stepping-stones to future improvement. Our programme of work as detailed in the Queen's Speech, though modest, was timely and reasonable and contained the establishment of a popular system of local government, the reform of education, the restoration of legal authority in Ireland and the reform of the procedure of the House of Commons. Churchill, though at times wayward and uncertain, had given glimpses of rare ability and insight in his speeches, and he was a popular darling with our go-ahead young men.

The debates of the first three nights on the Address were mere fencing ; but on the eve of the fourth the Government announced that, having received Smith's report upon Ireland, they proposed to bring in a Bill to suppress the Land League. No hostile Irish motion was made upon this notice, but a detail of the unauthorised programme of Chamberlain was moved by Mr. Jesse Collings as a vote of censure upon the Address. It was carried by 331 to 251,

eighteen Liberals, including Hartington, Goschen, James, Courtney and Lubbock, voting with the Government. Goschen also spoke strongly against the motion. Seventy-six Liberals, including Bright, also absented themselves from the division. Though defeated, as we knew we should be, we had succeeded in our object. We had split up the integrity of Gladstone's following, and the split was more significant as the action of those who voted for us and the inaction of those who abstained from voting were influenced by an intuitive distrust of Gladstone himself. A personal trust in Gladstone amounting almost to infallibility had in the past been his great political asset, but this division showed that his kaleidoscopic personality was becoming to him a source of weakness rather than of strength. We thus secured first blood in our preliminary sparring with the old Parliamentary hand, and this success was largely due to Churchill's able advice and vigorous lobbying.

CHAPTER II

IN the formation of his Government Gladstone acted with promptitude and decision. Recognising the reluctance of the old Whigs to join forces with him, he cut them adrift by the selection as Irish Secretary of so advanced a Home Ruler as Morley. This appointment at once antagonised Hartington and his followers, but it did not prevent Harcourt, Spencer and Childers, and others of that type from accepting office. Chamberlain and Trevelyan hesitated for some time, but ultimately they gave tentative support to Gladstone and became part of his administration, but they did so with some reluctance, and those who were intimate with them openly asserted that the probability was they would not swallow wholesale the undiluted dose of separatism which Morley and Gladstone would in all likelihood propose. Gladstone only offered Chamberlain a minor appointment in the shape of the Local Government Board—an office which in status and salary then ranked much below the position of a Secretary of State. Kimberley and Granville respectively became Indian and Colonial Ministers. Chamberlain at this time was, next to Gladstone, undoubtedly the most powerful member of the Radical Party, but he had annoyed Gladstone by the persistency with which on the platform he enunciated views in which, for the moment at least, Gladstone did not participate. It was a stupid

tactical mistake to give such marked priority to two somewhat antiquated Whig peers over the most virile Radical speaker and administrator of the day. The blunder at any time would have sown the seeds of antagonism in the administration, but in the new electorate, where Chamberlain's ability and efficiency were greatly admired and appreciated, the mistake was deeply resented by his followers and was exactly the class of slight calculated to strengthen Chamberlain's intuitive combative and critical faculties.

At the very outset of the assumption of office by the new administration a curious disturbance occurred in London known as the "Trafalgar Square Riots." One of those public meetings of which Trafalgar Square is so often the scene, promoted partly by Labour and partly by Socialistic organisations, to which is spontaneously added a riotous and criminal element, broke up in disorder, and a portion of the crowd so dispersed marched up the streets of the West End, robbing and looting the shops as they went along. By some oversight no reserve of police was available, and considerable damage, both personal and material, was done before the riot was overcome. This was a bad beginning for a Government bent on a great political revolution, and a scapegoat had to be found whose sacrifice would in some way quiet the disturbed nerves of the well-to-do Londoner. This was found in the person of Sir Edmund Henderson, the Chief Commissioner of Police, who was forced to resign his post. All who knew him much regretted the circumstances in which he retired, for he had for many years been a singularly efficient and popular head of the London Police.

Some time had necessarily to elapse before a measure of such dimensions as the Home Rule Bill

could be put together, and in that interval we had discussions on the Army and the Navy Estimates. My term of office at the Admiralty, though covering only the space of eight months, had been eventful. We had reorganised the whole system of administration by reinstating the individual Naval Lords in a position of personal responsibility for the respective departments assigned to their control. The First Naval Lord was made responsible for the general policy and strategy of the Fleet (thus opening out many spheres of supervision and preparation), the Second Naval Lord for the adequacy of the personnel, the Controller (or Third Naval Lord) had the same responsibility for the material, and the Fourth Naval Lord was in the same position as regards services, such as the medical and others, which, though necessary as a complement to fighting efficiency, were not enumerated amongst the combatant organisations.

We had begun the reorganisation of the dockyards and appointed a new Controller. Sir William White had also been induced to become Director of Naval Construction. His remarkable services to the Government are well known to all who have followed naval-construction expansion during the last thirty years. We had also taken the preliminary steps for obtaining control over the orders given and expenditure incurred for Naval Ordnance, so that for the future the scandal and danger of ships without guns and guns without ammunition might not occur again. In these and in other reforms I obtained the heartiest co-operation and help from the whole of my new Board. I have worked most of my official life with Boards or Councils, having been the head of the Admiralty and India Office for the

respective periods of seven and eight years—in each case a record tenure of office. I have no sympathy whatever with the politicals who contend that such Boards or Councils are so dilatory and reactionary that they are unworkable in periods of tension or reform. Without undue boasting I think I may claim, during the tenure of office of these two high posts, to have carried as many reforms or changes as have been accomplished in any office during a similar period. If patience, tact and energy be displayed, it is not difficult to extract out of subordinate colleagues valuable information, advice and suggestions, even when the changes to be made are not altogether palatable to the individuals consulted. To carry on satisfactorily and progressively Naval and Indian affairs with a Board or Council is far easier and simpler than to try to govern the British Empire through the medium of a large Parliamentary Cabinet. In the first case, your colleagues *do* read their papers and *do* know their subjects, which very often is not the case with a Cabinet. Moreover, officers and permanent officials are almost invariably loyal to their chief and have little or nothing to gain by intrigue. But the composition of the Board of Admiralty is such that a pomp and dignity surround its head far exceeding the deference shown to any other Minister, even the Prime Minister. The cause is easily explained. In the Navy an officer's position and authority are shown and recognised by his flag, a Vice-Admiral's flag superseding that of a Rear-Admiral, and a full Admiral that of a Vice-Admiral. The Admiralty flag ranks second in priority and salutes only to the Royal Standard, and has the salute of nineteen guns. The First Lord is the personal recipient of these honours, though to hoist

the Admiralty flag he must be accompanied by another member of the Board. He has the best official residence in Whitehall and, in addition, a large yacht at his disposal. The Board of Admiralty is the result of the office of the Lord High Admiral being put into commission, but certain of the privileges and the prestige of this high office still cling to the person of the First Lord. He is recognised by the Navy as the head of their Service and is so treated. His position in this respect is very different from that of the Minister of War in relation to the Army. Thus it comes to pass that the post of the First Lord of the Admiralty is the blue ribbon of offices, and is so recognised by all who have held it.

Shortly after I took this office I had a curious illustration of the First Lord's pretensions. My messenger was a quaint specimen of humanity, shrewd and capable but with peculiarities of his own. He came one morning into my room and in a melancholy voice addressed me as follows: "I regret to inform your Lordship that the turtle of the First Lord of the Admiralty has died." I took this announcement with unconcern, though I knew turtles were brought back by warships from Ascension—which is the home of turtles—whenever they came straight back to England, and I understood that the turtles so brought were looked upon as the perquisites of the Board of Admiralty. My messenger did not go, but looked at me with an air of commiseration. "I must inform your Lordship that this is the first occasion on which the First Lord's turtle has ever died." I said, "What happened before?" "It was the Fourth Lord's turtle that died."

My messenger was smart and well turned out

except as regards his coat. This consisted of alpaca and had seen many years' service. The Private Secretary remonstrated with him as regards his coat. He replied in some dudgeon : " Well, I am surprised. I am very proud of being the head messenger of the Admiralty, and every day when I walk to the Admiralty I puts on my best clothes, but then when I get to the office I puts on my official coat." Since then, I am glad to say, all the Admiralty messengers as well as those of other offices have been put into suitable uniform.

Lord Ripon succeeded me at the Admiralty, and Mr. Hibbert became the Parliamentary and Financial Secretary. I found both most reasonable and, to my great delight, ardent in a desire to improve and reform the Navy, even if the changes made entailed an increase to the Estimates. Ripon practically took my Estimates, and after a hard fight with Harcourt, the new Chancellor of the Exchequer, presented them intact to Parliament with one important exception. He got the money necessary for the new quick-firing breech-loaders, but at the last moment Harcourt crossed his pen through the provision of the ammunition for these guns. It was a mistake of which Harcourt heard a good deal in subsequent discussions on the efficiency of the Navy. W. H. Smith, who had been War Minister, experienced similar treatment as regards the funds for forts which had been built as a national necessity, but which were gunless. In vain he pleaded against this scandal of defenceless forts ; his protests were ignored. On the other hand, the reforms and ship-building I had initiated met with the approval of Parliament and were allowed to proceed.

We had a curious constitutional controversy in

which Gladstone figured very prominently. The new House of Commons took a democratic interest in the organisation and efficiency of that national force the Volunteers, and had passed a resolution advocating certain necessary improvements in the equipment of that body. This necessitated expenditure. Gladstone at once got on his high horse as a constitutionalist. He combated with all his authority and eloquence the right of the House of Commons to pass motions increasing expenditure, and he practically made the vote on the discussion one of confidence in himself, and he won, but only by the narrow majority of 187 to 166. Writing, as I now am, after the conclusion of this awful world-wide war which raged from 1914 to 1918, and in which we only escaped defeat and annihilation by the superlative fighting power of our seamen and soldiers, it seems almost incredible that there should have been for a long period a school of statesmen in power who, rather than incur a trivial expenditure on necessary national defence, were prepared to risk and endanger the whole fabric of our existence.

CHAPTER III

IN the interval between the assumption of office by Gladstone and the introduction of the Home Rule Bill all parties made vigorous preparation for the impending fray. It was essential, if the Conservative Party were to take up and maintain a successful attitude of uncompromising hostility to Gladstone's proposals, that they should have a clean slate as to the past. As I have already written, suspicion hovered around Churchill, as it was unquestionable that he had had communications before and during the recent election with certain prominent members of the Irish Party, and it was implied, if not asserted, by his enemies that he had obtained Irish votes through some understanding that he was not averse to a modified form of Home Rule. Though he always told me and his friends that he was absolutely free to oppose in any way he chose the principle of an independent Irish Parliament, his statement was received with some incredulity, and those hostile to him plainly asserted that if he now did take a strong line, damaging revelations would be made of his past overtures to the Home Rulers. But what subsequently transpired entirely endorsed his statement and acquitted him altogether of the allegations that he had in any way in his private electioneering negotiations tampered with or upset his public utterances on Home Rule. Before the Government Bill was introduced he made a strong and uncompromising attack upon Gladstone's tactics and policy, and this opening speech was followed up by

utterances which became stronger and stronger as the fight developed and which culminated in his stirring address to the men of Belfast: "Ulster will fight and Ulster will be right."

Carnarvon had unwisely interviewed Parnell at his house in London, and the misuse Parnell made of this interview was such that even the courteous Carnarvon was forced publicly to say that he never would again exchange any communication with Parnell unless a third party were present. Any scrap of evidence, either oral or written, in the possession of the Home Rule Party proving Churchill's complicity in Home Rule would have been remorselessly exploited to discredit so redoubtable and provocative an antagonist. Nothing was produced or even insinuated, so with rehabilitated reputation, so far as the old Tories were concerned, Churchill stepped into the forefront of the battle.

Just before the introduction of the Home Rule Bill a notable figure disappeared from the political stage. In the Parliamentary turmoil of the last few years there was no personage around whose doings raged a fiercer controversy or around whose personality a wider difference of opinion existed than W. E. Forster, the ex-Secretary for Ireland. He was a very clever man, with a curious roughness of manner and speech which, though effective in debate, belied rather than expressed the inner workings of his mind. He had many fine qualities—great courage, both moral and physical, and a tenacious sense of what was right. At critical moments of his career, in spite of party abuse and heavy pressure, he resolutely adhered to what he considered to be national objects rather than partisan claims. He declined, when Education

Minister, to secularise national education ; he resolutely applied himself to put down outrage and village scoundrelism in Ireland, and in South Africa he strongly opposed a policy of surrender to the Boers by which large native populations were handed over to their domination. If not a Quaker, he was very close to that sect, and whilst the integrity of his motives was absolutely unquestioned, he was a little too "foxy" in his methods of giving expression to them. He consequently got amongst those from whom he differed a character for trickiness and waywardness which was wholly unjustified. It must, however, be admitted that the rôle of an advanced Radical, which he never abandoned, was somewhat difficult for him to maintain when, on such vital questions as Education, Ireland and South Africa, he traversed and opposed the pet theories of a large portion of the party to which he nominally belonged. He had taken a prominent part in relieving the horrors of the Irish famine in 1847-8, and it was with alacrity that he accepted the post of Irish Secretary in 1880, as he hoped in high office to put into effect politically for Ireland the same ideas of philanthropy and methods of amelioration which had prompted his previous action. A few months' experience of the Land Campaign, its ulterior methods and the ghastly outrages both on men and women by which it was conducted, was a real eye-opener to him, and he declared in a fine speech in 1883 that, whilst he would do all he could to restore prosperity and peace to Ireland, he absolutely declined even for that purpose to co-operate with those who promoted crime and outrage as the means of securing political gains. His speech was ethically unanswerable, but

those whom he so properly denounced commanded over 80 votes in the House of Commons. Morality went to the winds, and Forster's name became anathema to a certain section of English Radicals. No man could speak more effectively on Irish questions, and he would have been a doughty fighter on the Unionist side in the coming debates. His removal by death was a rare piece of luck for Gladstone and his Government.

The preparation of the Home Rule Bill opened out a number of the most involved and controversial questions—financial, fiscal, racial, religious and Parliamentary. These questions were in themselves so interlaced and contradictory in their solution that it would have been very difficult to place them on a workable and expanding basis, even with a clean slate and with ample time for their investigation; but when the foundation on which they were to rest was not a unified religious and national community, but one where for three hundred years an undying division of religion, race and politics had existed, and when the arrangements hastily made were to be an irrevocable covenant between Great Britain and Ireland, the impossibility of adequately grappling in a few weeks with this overwhelming mass of problems became apparent even to the members of the Government themselves, as several of them have since admitted to me. But Gladstone was obdurate and unconvincible. "An old man in a hurry" was Churchill's irreverent description of his conduct, and this designation was unquestionably correct. The difficulties became worse the more they were examined, and some of them, as Gladstone himself subsequently said, "passed the wit of man to overcome"; yet the

Bill had to be prosecuted and introduced. Upon its introduction Chamberlain and Trevelyan resigned. The scene in the House of Commons upon the introduction of the Bill was spectacular to the highest degree. Not only was every inch of the House itself thronged with Members, but all the gangways and passages and every unoccupied space in the Chamber were packed with chairs, and it was the only occasion in my Parliamentary life that I have seen it so utilised. The magnetic centre of this unique gathering was an old man of seventy-five years of age, who for three hours or more made a speech which was almost perfect so far as arrangement, language and gesture were concerned; yet there was not a well-informed individual amongst that audience who did not soon realise that this wonderful oration only skimmed the surface of the relentless problems it touched. It was a supreme effort to make words dominate facts and high-flown phrases settle incurable differences of rival races, religions and interests.

Bright about this time remarked that there were not twenty Members on the Liberal benches who would have looked at the Home Rule Bill if Gladstone's personality had not been associated with it. Yet because he was their titular leader most of the Liberal Party subordinated everything to that claim and gave offhand their adhesion to an irremediable split in our national organisation which three months back they would have dismissed with contumely.

Chamberlain's explanation of the causes of his resignation and disapproval of the Bill was most effective, but it was made in circumstances of great embarrassment. Gladstone objected throughout to his reading any letters or making any allusion to

the Land Bill or any legislation which, though they were admitted to be the necessary consequences of the Bill now under observation, were not tabled or known to the House. By these sustained technical objections he greatly curtailed the scope and effect of Chamberlain's explanation. The sight of Chamberlain thus trammelled and chained when fighting for his political life and honour made a deep impression upon many of those who, like myself, had been in personal collision with him in bygone controversies. By opposing Gladstone he gave up his unquestioned reversion to the leadership of the Liberal Party. From a political standpoint he had everything to lose by his sacrifice of party to principle.

A short time back I had made a personal attack on Chamberlain which gave him great umbrage, and we had not spoken to each other for years. Chamberlain early in life, in company with his cousin Nettlefold, achieved an astounding trade and commercial success. In a few years, by diplomatic negotiation and pressure on the one hand and by substituting scientific standardised methods of production on the other hand, these two young men consolidated the whole industries connected with the manufacture of screws in Great Britain into one organisation, of which they became the heads. Not content with this, they mapped out the whole world into districts and allotted to themselves and two other foreign firms the territories in which each organisation might alone sell its wares. The result, although it greatly improved the wages and conditions of life amongst the employees of the consolidated firms and cheapened to the general public the supply of screws, was a monopoly of the most rigid and undeniable type. Chamberlain ceased his

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personal connection with the firm he had so largely created when he took to active political life.

Between 1882 and 1885 Salisbury and he were the two most expert swordsmen of their respective parties, and often crossed swords. On one occasion Salisbury wrote a very able appeal on behalf of the aims and policy of the Conservative Party, to which Chamberlain made a vitriolic reply mainly based on the alleged monopoly of land held by Conservatives. I could not resist taking several of these passages on monopoly and substituting for "monopolist landlords" "monopolist screw-manufacturers." It was a legitimate retort, but I have no doubt that I embellished the passages by caustic remarks about manufacturing monopolists. At any rate, my speech so annoyed Chamberlain that we broke off personal relations.

As I had a sincere admiration for the fine qualities with which he was endowed, I thought it only right to tender to him my regret that our friendly relations should have been impaired by anything I said, and the two following letters resulted in re-establishing kindly personal relations between us, which, notwithstanding our differences in fiscal questions, remained steadfast for the remainder of his life :

" April 10th, 1886.

" DEAR SIR,

Although we have not had any personal intercourse for some years past, your manly and able defence in circumstances of the greatest embarrassment and depression and your adherence to principle induce me to address you. The question upon which you refused to give up your opinion dwarfs every other subject that has or can be raised in Parliament. The scheme you repudiate means ruin in every sense of the word to all those who, like myself,

are Anglo-Irish. We cannot, without the help of men like yourself or Hartington, hope to save ourselves by our own exertions from the doom hanging over us. With every political and personal inducement to do otherwise you refused to give way, and your resolute stand has already done incalculable good by setting an example to those who were inclined to waver and cannot think for themselves. For such a service, rendered in the teeth of much obloquy and misrepresentation, an acknowledgment is due. I have been and probably shall always be one of those who differ in many essentials from your political views. If, in the expression of those differences, language has been used by me which has prevented friendly intercourse between us, I can only say for myself I feel that I ought to express regret for having ignored and misunderstood those qualities which you exhibited last night in your masterly self-vindication.

Believe me,

Yours very truly,

GEORGE HAMILTON."

" April 10th, 1886.

" DEAR LORD GEORGE,

Your letter has touched me. When a party man like myself is forced to separate himself from his usual associates, I think the applause of his former opponents is almost as painful to him as the condemnation of his quondam friends. But in your case I do not feel this; and I heartily appreciate the spirit of your letter.

Some time ago, on information which I can positively assure you was untrustworthy, you publicly accused me of conduct in private and commercial life which would have been dishonourable and disgraceful. I resented this accusation bitterly, but after your generous admission of to-day I shall dismiss it from my mind, and if, as is probable, we are again separated in the future by political differ-

ences, I hope sincerely that we may be able to maintain mutual feelings of personal respect.

I am,

Yours very truly,
J. CHAMBERLAIN."

The Radical Press was terribly perturbed at the division in the ranks of their party over the Home Rule Bill, for it became clearer, as the controversy proceeded, that doubt and disquietude were simmering in the minds of many staunch old supporters of the Radical cause. So a lead was given to the doubtful by a great mass meeting held at His Majesty's Theatre, at which a number of Liberal leaders appeared on the same platform as Conservatives in antagonism to the Bill. An attempt was made by Gladstone to label those of his party differing from him as recalcitrants from the orthodox and admitted Liberal principles. His designation for them was "Dissentient Liberals." His opponents retorted by pointing out that it was he and not they who were heterodox, and they took to themselves the name of "Liberal Unionists," which title has prevailed up to the present day.

Hartington and Chamberlain soon became in the House of Commons the recognised leaders of the new party, and the former undertook to move the rejection of the second reading of the Bill. The debate was constantly adjourned, and thus became somewhat disconnected, but it was characterised on both sides by speeches of an unusually high standard. The more the scheme was debated the more apparent it became that it was only half-baked and that little, if any, consideration had been given to the innumerable and important by-issues which would crop up under the new conditions to

be established. In fact, with the exception of Gladstone, the Government seemed to be relieved at the prospect of defeat, as it was the only legitimate form of relief from the crude and contradictory principles to which they found themselves temporarily harnessed. The Bill was eventually thrown out by 343 to 313, a majority of 30. Gladstone at once appealed to the country.

The debate, though it suffered from constant adjournments, was very vivacious, and the speaking was exceptionally good. Gladstone, Russell of Killowen and Morley were the Home Rule champions; Hartington, Chamberlain, James, Courtney, Beach, Churchill, Balfour and Plunket spoke most effectively in behalf of national unity.

Some years later, when I was sitting at dinner next to Russell of Killowen, we reverted to the Home Rule debates, and I said that the speaking on both sides was more sustained and on a higher level than any I could recollect. He replied, "Yes, very good; but who do you think was the speaker whom we most disliked to follow?" I replied, "Probably Goschen." "You are near it," he said; "it was Hicks Beach," and he then went on to say that, although he lacked the eloquence and pungency of some of his colleagues, there was a virile common-sense and moderation prevailing over the spirit and substance of his arguments which gave the dialectician little or nothing to catch hold of. I was much pleased at the compliment paid to an old and valued friend. Beach and Hartington possessed to a marked degree the faculty of expressing in better language than he could command the ideas of the man in the street. This was the secret of their widefelt influence and long-maintained power.

CHAPTER IV

THE rent in the old Liberal Party, made by Gladstone's sudden conversion to Home Rule, was so great and general that it was a foregone conclusion that they would be beaten on that issue. It is true that, outside Birmingham and the big towns in its locality, the actual voting power of the Liberal Unionists was small, but their leaders were the pick of the old Gladstonian Party, and their powers of speech and writing were considerable. Bright, though unable to appear upon the public platform, took great interest in the election, and his published letters were extraordinarily effective. His mastery of curt, concise language was never more apparent, and some of his short letters are quite masterpieces of innuendo and denunciation. I quote one as an example.

Gladstone had fulsomely eulogised Wales in disparagement of Ulster, and Bright thereupon remarked on June 6th, 1887 :

“ Ulster may be a nationality different from the rest of Ireland at least as much as Wales differs from England, but Wales is treated to a flattery which, if not insincere, seems to me childish, and Ulster is forgotten in the discussion of the Irish question. Is it not wonderful how one-sided Mr. Gladstone can be, and how his great intellect can be subjected to one idea, and how he can banish from his mind everything, however important, which does not suit the purpose and object before him ? ”

Gladstone protested, and Bright replied to his protest, summing up in these words :

"I grieve that I cannot act with you as in years past, but my judgment and conscience forbid it. If I have said a word which seems harsh or unfriendly, I will ask you to forgive me."

Just about this time both Gladstone and Bright were sitting for their portraits to that great artist Sir John Millais. One day, during a sitting, Gladstone noticed an unfinished portrait of Bright in the corner of the studio, and he said to Millais: "I see that you are painting my old friend Bright." "Yes," said Millais. "Does he talk to you?" asked Gladstone. "Oh yes." "Is he all right here?" said Gladstone, tapping his forehead. "Oh, I think so," said Millais.

A few days afterwards Bright was a sitter. Looking round the room he saw the unfinished portrait of Gladstone, and he said, "Oh, Sir John, my old friend Gladstone is sitting to you?" "Yes," said Millais. "I suppose he talks a great deal to you?" "Oh yes," said Millais. "Do you know that he is not right here?" replied Bright, tapping his forehead.

It is humorous to note how these two most distinguished politicians who had so long acted together and been colleagues, when they differed on a serious question, at once threw doubts on the mental stability of the other. The different temperaments of the two men are well illustrated, for whereas Gladstone put forward his ideas as a proposition, Bright at once translated his into a fact.

There was a large abstention of voters who, previous to this election, could have been counted upon as certain supporters of the Radical creed. The general poll was in consequence light, and small polls always help the Conservative side.

The majority of 31 in the old Parliament in favour of Home Rule was turned into a majority

of 113 against it, and Gladstone at once resigned office. Of this majority, viz. 113, the Liberal Unionists could claim about 70, so they held the balance between the old Gladstonians and the Conservatives. The majority, though satisfactory in its numbers, was very heterogeneous in its composition. Many of the Liberal Unionists, especially those under Chamberlain, were advanced Radicals and had never in their lives been in a Tory lobby, and the same might be said, *mutatis mutandis*, of a large proportion of the Tories.

Soon after the election there were indications that even upon Home Rule some of the left wing of the Liberal Unionist Party were wobblers. The question at once arose, how could this uncongenial amalgamation be best maintained and in process of time be transmuted into a reliable and permanent Parliamentary majority? At first sight the simplest course would seem to be the formation of a Coalition Government under Salisbury, allotting to the Liberal-Unionist leaders their fair proportion of offices. Both Hartington and Chamberlain were opposed to this idea, and they were wise in the decision. They contended that friction and difficulty must in any event arise between the two wings of the alliance, and that by keeping their freedom of position and action intact they would be better able to prevent secession and to smooth down the inevitable differences arising between politicians trained and reared in different schools of tradition and thought. They undertook to support Salisbury's Government generally, but this offer of support was associated with a concession from Salisbury that they should be consulted on all measures and legislation not only connected with Ireland and the maintenance

of order, but affecting other subjects. The next question to be settled was, where were they to sit? This at first sight, and especially to outsiders, seems a matter of small importance, but it is one which, when faction runs high and divisions are close, is a matter of vital importance in the management of the House. It was settled that the Liberal-Unionist Leaders should sit on the Front Opposition Bench, a decision subjecting them to much unpleasantness and at times unmannerly conduct from their opponents; but the fact that this front bench on every important occasion spoke with two voices and diverged into two lobbies accentuated the fact that the indivisibility of Radicalism was a thing of the past and made the Liberal-Unionist organisation, both in Parliament and outside, a separate and recognisable political entity. The rank and file of the party grouped themselves according to their tastes, the more moderate on our side, the more advanced with their previous colleagues.

As regards the personnel of the Cabinet, the post of difficulty was Ireland. Who would undertake it? On our side by far the best qualified man for the post was Hicks Beach. He had been a successful Chief Secretary and established a character for straightforwardness and fair play which won for him, except amongst the extremists, respect and reputation. Could he be persuaded to take it? He was in indifferent health, his private affairs urgently needed his attention, and he had unpleasant symptoms of a failure of sight. He had shown great ability in his handling of finance, and he had led his party in the House of Commons with success; but many of the duties connected with the post of leader were uncongenial to him, and he was quite

ready to be relieved of them. On the other hand, Churchill's ability and energy had been so conspicuous during the last few months and his aptitude for work which Beach disliked was so clear that if Beach retired from the leadership he would be his natural successor. This was settled with the consent of the two concerned, and then Churchill turned his whole power of suasion and pressure upon Beach to go to Ireland; he was supported by Smith and others, and ultimately Beach yielded. His resignation of the leadership of the Tory Party and his acceptance in its place of the most onerous and unpleasant of public offices when in doubtful health were two acts of extraordinary self-abnegation: he faced the ordeal solely from a sense of public duty. Beach thus put Churchill under a double personal obligation upon the formation of the Government by enabling him to become Leader of the House and Chancellor of the Exchequer. Smith and I returned to our old offices—the War Office and Admiralty.

When Beach became Irish Secretary, Churchill undertook to let him have No. 11, Downing Street, as his London residence. I was in London at the time with available servants, and at Lady Lucy Hicks Beach's suggestion I agreed to live with Beach and keep house for him during the autumn session.

The Board of Admiralty was changed in its composition (though I secured my old colleagues, Admirals Hood and Hoskins) by Captain Lord Charles Beresford becoming Fourth Sea Lord, Mr. Forwood Parliamentary Secretary, Ashmead-Bartlett Civil Lord.

It was not an easy team to manage. The two First Naval Lords were men of first-class administrative ability and very wide experience but strict

disciplinarians. The duties of Fourth Sea Lord are exacting, monotonous and subordinate, but they cannot legitimately come under the limelight. Beresford was a very old friend of mine ; we were at school together and sat for two years at the same little table. He was a splendid man of action, but he had no administrative experience, and he had always been the pet of the little coterie in which he moved ; how would he comply with conditions so contrary to his past life and tastes ?

Forwood had a rare driving power as an administrator and reformer, but he had not the knack of making himself popular either with individuals or the general public. He was a very great benefactor to Liverpool, but he was the only prominent Tory who had no chance of representing that town in Parliament. Collisions between him and the Controller of the Navy were a certainty.

Ashmead-Bartlett, though a very good fellow and very amusing, was not a peacemaker.

However, Salisbury pressed on me these appointments, and I promised to do what I could to make them pull together, but, as I shall subsequently show, the job was more difficult than I had anticipated.

I was convinced, from my previous experience at the Admiralty, of the necessity of great changes and reforms in the whole system of naval administration. Although my colleagues might differ as to methods, they were in their own way all genuine reformers.

When Parliament met for a short autumn session to wind up the annual business left unfinished by the late Parliament, there was both curiosity and anxiety felt as to how Churchill would lead the House of Commons. He was under forty years of age—in fact, the youngest leader in charge of the

House since William Pitt assumed that post in 1783. He had a dangerous combination against him headed by Gladstone and Parnell, and a new and untested Coalition Party behind him. His rise and career have been well described as meteoric, and his success with the public was mainly due to ferocious personalities which, though sometimes questionable, showed great knowledge of human nature and a rare command of language and a total lack of reverence.

How would he grapple with the "old Parliamentary hand"? Gladstone's heavy defeat in the last election had not improved his claim to that title. He had burnt his old idols and had smashed his party by the performance. He also was in his seventy-eighth year, but his speaking showed outwardly little signs of decay. In this country, as I have before said, too much importance is attached to ease and fluency of speech; it is the main test by which a man's political capacity is gauged. When a man speaks easily and well, this facility of speech is the last attribute to leave him as he gets old. Judgment, decision, readiness to face opposition and the many latent qualities necessary for serious public life evanesce, but the power to talk remains. On the platform and in the House of Commons he is the same imposing figure as before, but his capacity for governing is gone or going. If this rule holds good in the case of ordinary speakers, how much more does it apply to a consummate orator like Gladstone, who when speaking utilised every iota of physical and moral ethical force he could extract from his whole being. In 1886 he was not by any means the same man he had been before he embarked on his Home Rule venture, and Churchill knew it

and remorselessly drove home in his capacity of leader his sense of Gladstone's decadence.

In his opening speech upon the Address Gladstone adopted his usual attitude and tone of kindly superiority, laying down certain ideas and propositions which in the halcyon days of his supremacy would not have been challenged. But Churchill in his reply pushed all his ideas summarily on one side and flattened them out. By some rare intuition he had guessed the probable purport of Gladstone's admonitions and was fully prepared in fact and argument to meet them. It was an extraordinary performance and established Churchill as a debater of the very first order. My brother Claud, in driving home with me and discussing the debate, said, "I never recollect Gladstone so sat upon. How surprised he was!"

Let me here by way of parenthesis say that men, especially great speakers, ought to have an age-limit put upon their career as Members of Parliament. It is the custom to say that old age is not impetuous and that counsels of caution and moderation will generally emanate from venerable lips. That is not by any means my experience. It may be true of those who do not love the limelight and who naturally retire into private life when they become conscious of a growing ineptitude. But the orator and talker as he gets older is apt to catch at almost anything which will resuscitate his failing reputation. On the platform, and still more in the House of Commons, I have seen old men, in trying to get *en rapport* with their audience, say not what they intended originally, but what a certain portion of their audience wanted them to say. The utterance may be unwise, foolish and dangerous, but because it fell from the mouth of an old man the unthinking public accepts it as safe.

CHAPTER V

DURING this short session Churchill continued to gain golden opinions from his leadership : he was alert, courteous, always in the House and apparently he kept his temper well under control. I soon became very intimate with him, and this arose from my constant endeavour to smooth down differences between him and colleagues and from the knowledge that, as regards changes and reforms, I was more advanced than some members of the Cabinet. A very unpleasant incident occurred towards the end of the session which filled me with apprehension as regards Churchill's future. I am the only person left who witnessed it, and I break no convention in narrating it.

I went late one evening to Churchill's room in the House of Commons to settle some business connected with the Admiralty. After we had disposed of it, Churchill suddenly broke out into a most violent tirade against Beach. Knowing their old friendship and the obligations under which Beach had placed him, the outburst amazed me, and as soon as I could get in a word I tried to find out the cause. I could get nothing very definite except that Beach's attitude towards the Irish landlords was almost inhuman. I pressed for details, but could get nothing tangible. Whilst we were so talking, the door opened and in came Beach. I rose to go out. "No," said Churchill ; "I want you to stop." He then proceeded to strut up and down his room rating and attacking

Beach much in the sort of way as, we are told, Napoleon did when dealing with a recalcitrant Marshal. Beach said little, though he was evidently much surprised by the onslaught. After this unpleasant scene had gone on for some time, Beach said with dignity, "I will take into consideration what you have said." The division bell rang; we went out, and the House adjourned. I walked home with Beach, but, knowing his hot temper, I hesitated to revert to Churchill's behaviour. Suddenly he said to me, "Did I not behave well?" "Marvellously well," I replied. "I cannot understand how you kept your temper under the unjustifiable attack made upon you." I asked him if he could explain it, and he said, "No, I cannot." Churchill was then posing as an advanced Tory Democrat, and that he should have suddenly become such a landlord's man as to run amok at Beach was quite inexplicable. My own view of the outbreak was that it was jealousy of the general feeling of admiration and sympathy for Beach's splendid altruism which undoubtedly made him the most esteemed if not influential man in the House. But, whatever the cause of the outbreak, it was clear that if it occurred again the Government could not be kept together. Before going to bed, I wrote a long and strong letter to Churchill, pointing out the inconsistency of being so courteous to opponents in the House of Commons and so violent to his best friend in the Cabinet; that a persistence in such conduct must result in the break-up of a Government only a few days old; and that the blame for such a political fiasco would certainly fall on him and permanently mar his career. I worded the letter very carefully, so as to give no verbal offence, and posted it before I went to bed. Next

morning at breakfast we neither of us alluded to the trouble of overnight, but Beach came in to luncheon quite radiant, saying, "I have had such a nice letter from Churchill, apologising for his language last night, and I have asked him to dine with us to-day." On going into the House of Commons to answer questions, Churchill beckoned to me to come and sit next him. "Oh, George, I want to thank you for your letter. I showed it to Smith, who said you were quite right. I have made it up with Beach, and will dine with you to-night." This he did, and made himself charming during the whole evening.

It is said, "All is well that ends well," but after this experience of Churchill's waywardness I looked with great anxiety upon his future leadership. On thinking the matter over, I could only come to the conclusion that his nervous system was overstrained and that we might soon again have an outburst which would be irremediable.

The House adjourned till January, 1887, and Cabinet meetings were resumed in November. Churchill became in the meantime more and more difficult. He was constantly speaking in public, and he had socially surrounded himself with a coterie of "able go-aheads" and "damn-the-consequences" young men. He was extraordinarily attractive when he pleased, but offensive to the last degree to those he disliked or whom he suspected of being opposed to him. He told me that he felt his relations to Salisbury were those of Peel towards Wellington, and that it was his intention to drive Salisbury into a more democratic policy. I more than once warned him that he was going too fast, and that if he did not take care the whole existing fabric of political Unionism would break up.

There is a common belief that when a man with a strong platform policy but with no official experience or tradition behind him is made the head of a big department, he will carry great reforms by ignoring or over-riding his permanent officials. Sometimes this is the case, but not unfrequently, when the experiment has been tried, it is the permanent staff who absorb their chief; they and not he become the boa-constrictor. The less the chief knows of official work and the previous policy of his department, the more dependent does he become on those who do know. Before Churchill went to the Treasury he was the supporter of a strong Navy; as Indian Secretary he advocated the expansion of military establishments. He had ridiculed and denounced up and down the country the economics of the Manchester School. The Treasury at that time was staffed with officials of the old Cobden type, and they stuffed him with their theories, which he swallowed with gusto; he became at once a most violent economist and Free-trader.

The corn and wine duties originally imposed in Charles II's reign around London to help defray the cost of St. Paul's had been periodically renewed by Parliaments since that date. Through their instrumentality great London improvements had been effected, the last two being the Thames Embankment and Holborn Viaduct. These duties partook of the nature of an octroi, a detestable form of taxation to the free-exchange purist. The date for the fixture and term of the renewal was approaching, and, in spite of the strong protests of the Metropolitan Board of Works and a large section of the Government, Churchill obstinately declined to renew them for any length of time. With their cessation the con-

struction of great arterial thoroughfares through London came practically to a standstill. The almost insoluble difficulties of London traffic have been greatly enhanced by the deprivation of this permanent lucrative and easily collected duty.

A mail contract for the transmission of mails to America had to be renewed. Hitherto the contractors had to be British subjects owning and controlling British ships. But this necessary limitation was contrary to abstract principles of free competition, so the new contract included German liners and ships. Here again Churchill acted contrary to the wishes of his colleagues and certainly to public opinion, and he infuriated the ship-owning community.

Cecil Raikes, a very able man whose premature death was a great loss both in a party and national sense, was then Postmaster-General. He was over-ridden in the matter. However, he and I had our revenge, for we subsequently drew up between our two offices a form of mail contract for the future in which, during war, the Admiralty had the right to commandeer all vessels subsidised for carrying royal mails. This effectually knocked out the Germans.

But the budget he laid before the Cabinet, and which is detailed at length in the admirable *Life of Churchill* written by his son Winston, is another instance of the instantaneous and strong hold the Treasury pundits obtained over their chief. For the last half-century the fiscal complaint of the party of which Churchill now was the leader was the undue taxation of realty as compared with personalty. Upon land and houses fell almost exclusively the heavy and increasing burdens of local taxation, whilst for Imperial purposes income tax and house duty

were levied on an assessment neither just in its incidence nor results.

Whether it was part of the vendetta against landed proprietors which the Cobdenite School nourished or whether the Radicals honestly believed that it was for the national good that realty should be over-taxed is immaterial. What did matter was that the whole trend of fiscal legislation in this country had for many years past showed a bias against landed property and agriculture. Extreme Free-traders had gone so far as to advocate a special graduated and progressive house duty, the duty to be raised in proportion to the rateable value of the house. Successive Chancellors of the Exchequer had declined to adopt this increased import on account of its unfairness and necessary unpopularity.

When Churchill laid before his colleagues his budget for the incoming year, its main features were a progressive house duty rising up to 3s. 6d. in the pound. He expounded his scheme with extraordinary cleverness, and it was mainly on account of this remarkable display of ability and research that his colleagues were induced to give a tentative and half-hearted acquiescence to the plan. On its merits it was unanimously disapproved, but the general feeling was that, having so gifted a colleague as Leader and Chancellor of the Exchequer, it would not be advisable to break with him on his first attempt at the construction of an original budget. Moreover, he promised to see what compensation, either through the imposition of new or the remission of old taxation, he could give to those heavily mulcted by his proposals.

For the time being peace was maintained, but as the meeting of Parliament came nearer, everybody

became conscious that Churchill's budget could not stand the hostility it would provoke, and I am quite confident that he was beginning to share that opinion. Now, it may be reasonably asked, why did Salisbury and his colleagues give a tentative assent to a budget the principles of which they disapproved and which no subsequent Chancellor of the Exchequer has advocated? The reply is that we were part of a Coalition combination, and a coalition necessarily means a relaxation and at times abandonment of the principles hitherto regulating the respective parties forming the coalition. Coalitions in recent years have been formed not to obtain office for individuals, but to ward off a supreme national danger. Coalitions of this character involve on all sides personal self-sacrifice, and not the least of these sacrifices is the relaxation of the hold on principles and ideas in which one has been trained and to which one still wishes to adhere. But the national danger is like the sword of Damocles, ever swinging over your head, and you hesitate to break the thread by which it alone is held up. There is a point beyond which you cannot honourably go, but in the turmoil and dust of a continuous struggle it is difficult to fix the exact limit of self-effacement, and the nature of the ordeal through which you are passing tends to make you think less and less of your own interests and more and more of those of your country.

Logically and morally we ought at the outset to have rejected Churchill's budget, but if we had done so, the coalition, by which alone national unity would be preserved, would have been broken. We took the lesser of the two evils, but the knowledge (which could not escape the alert intellect of Churchill) of what temporarily induced us to assent to his scheme

was, I am sure, a governing influence in his subsequent lightning resignation. He then knew what we previously knew, that the realisation of his proposed budget was impracticable, except at the price of a permanent smash-up of the Tory Party.

There remained the settlement of the Navy and Army Estimates, and the discussion on these brought Smith and myself into close personal correspondence with Churchill. We were, however, the two members of the Cabinet who were on the most friendly terms with him, and he was constantly sending for or seeing us on controversial questions outside our departments, and we both had a moderating influence upon him. I was soon able to come to an agreement with him through the luck of my Estimates automatically reducing themselves, not by curtailment of services, but by a miscalculation made by Childers in 1884, when Chancellor of the Exchequer.

In those days a Minister at the Admiralty or War Office was regarded by the Treasury as a good or bad administrator not by the return he obtained by his expenditure, but by the amount by which his Estimates fell short of or exceeded the expenditure of the preceding year. A Chancellor of the Exchequer budgeted for the incoming budget on the Estimates of the revenue and expenditure of the preceding year. Assuming that he could, by this comparison, obtain a surplus, it was of secondary importance whether this surplus was obtained by a fall in expenditure or increase of income.

In 1884, under popular pressure, the Government was obliged to increase the normal Estimates by a special expenditure of £3,100,000, and Childers (at that time Chancellor of the Exchequer) and the

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naval authorities spread this outlay over a period of five years in the following proportions :

1884-5	.	.	£800,000
1885-6	.	.	£800,000
1886-7	.	.	£500,000
1887-8	.	.	£500,000
1888-9	.	.	£500,000

and contracts for these amounts were made with certain shipbuilding firms. But the shipbuilding industry was very short of work, and they earned their payments at the following rates :

1884-5	.	.	£1,300,000
1885-6	.	.	£1,000,000

leaving only £800,000, as against £1,500,000, to be subsequently provided in the last three years. Under the system of accounting in vogue the transfer of every pound from the expenditure of 1886-7 to that of 1885-6 made a difference of £2 between the figures of the two years, and I was therefore able apparently to reduce the Estimates by a large sum and at the same time get the benefit of a larger amount of work towards the completion of my new programme.

Smith had a more difficult task in coming to terms with the Chancellor of the Exchequer ; he had no such concession available. However, he came very nearly to a general agreement with Churchill upon his expenditure, except as regards the armament for the forts built years back and which were gunless. His demand for this urgent expenditure amounted to about £200,000, and I understood from him that upon this point he had no idea that Churchill con-

sidered it so serious as to necessitate a rupture with him and his colleagues.

The news from Ireland was serious. The Land League had promulgated the plan of campaign policy, which meant that tenants fixed their own rents and banked that amount with the various organisations of the Land League. No one knew better than Churchill that any weakening of the Government at Westminster would greatly aggravate Irish disorder and promote the interests of the Home Rule policy.

The Gladstonian Party had recovered from the shock of their defeat and were on the warpath under the direction of their aged but imprudent chief. To make Parliament unmanageable and Ireland ungovernable was clearly the object of the Gladstone-Parnellite combination. On our side, if Ireland was to be governed, the Land League had to be suppressed and Parliament utilised for that purpose.

Beach's health and sight were both becoming worse, and, though he pluckily adhered to his post, it was doubtful how long he could continue to bear its strain.

These facts were well known to Churchill, as he was in close personal communication with Beach. In the middle of December the Cabinet adjourned for some weeks. Apparently Churchill was placated by the extraordinary consideration shown to him, and we all hoped that for the immediate future all the energies of the Unionist Party would be concentrated on fighting the dangerous combination arrayed against them.

CHAPTER VI

A FEW days after the Cabinet had adjourned, I received a command to dine at Windsor. On walking down the platform at Paddington to catch a local train, I heard the well-known voice of Churchill saying, "Hullo, George, where are you going?" "To Windsor," I replied. "What luck!" he said. "I am going there too; come into this carriage." I got in, and the train almost immediately started. Churchill then turned round to me and said, "I am going to resign." I thought he was joking, and said, "What are you going to resign about?" "Oh, Smith's and your Estimates." I said, "We have practically settled everything." "No," he said, "I cannot go on any longer." I then pointed out to him that he could not resign on so trivial a pretext, that the Houses of Parliament were about to meet, that he had been a party to their summons, and that there were grave national and Imperial dangers ahead. To all my arguments he could make but one reply: "I am going to resign." He would give no reasons and offered no arguments worth analysing.

We arrived at Windsor, and he said to me, "Come and sit in my room." I took a box of work there, and I sat on one side of the table and he on the other. I tried to press my objections to the course he proposed, but with no effect, and he said, "Now I am going to write a letter to Salisbury," and he

sat for a long time opposite me writing with a very scratchy quill-pen on Windsor Castle notepaper. After a great deal of cogitation he finished his letter, and he said to me, "Now I am going to read to you what I have written to Salisbury," and the letter was the well-known document which was subsequently published. I said to him, "In existing circumstances, you cannot send a letter like that to Salisbury. I cannot understand the situation. Won't you consult somebody?" "No," he said; "I won't consult anybody." I said, "Have you spoken to your mother, the Duchess?" "No," he said. The Duchess was one of the ablest women I ever met; she had a great influence over Randolph, and had largely helped him in his success and had advised him well in his troublous career. At that time, although I did not know it, she was staying with Lord Salisbury at Hatfield. I could make no impression whatever, but as our discussion proceeded I became conscious that there was some motive which I could not gauge, other than political considerations, and which had induced him to take this very hasty step.

The bell rang, and we had to dress for dinner. After dinner he said to me, "I have sent that letter to Salisbury." I knew then that the whole fat was in the fire. Salisbury's patience had been very much strained during the past three or four months, the whole Cabinet was groaning and creaking from the wayward and uncontrolled language and action of one member, and I was certain that Salisbury would be only too pleased to accept that colleague's resignation.

We went up to London by the earliest train, which we just caught. Neither Churchill nor I had any

change, and the newspaper agent on the station handed him a huge pile of papers, for Churchill was always an omnivorous newspaper reader. "I have no change," said Churchill; "have you any?" I said "No, I have not." "Oh," said the Press agent, "it does not matter; you will pay next time you come back, my lord," and as the train went out Churchill, soliloquising, said, partly to himself and partly to me: "He little thinks that I shall never come back again."

As soon as I got back to London I went off straight to the War Office and told Smith the startling news. He was as much surprised as I was, and could not understand it. As he had very nearly arrived at an understanding with Churchill, he could not believe that in so grave a national crisis Churchill would throw up his post. Smith had a very high sense of duty. It was, in his mind, a gross dereliction of duty for Churchill under these conditions to abandon his office. Later on in the day Smith told me that he heard Churchill was in a high state of excitement; he was so impatient to let it be known that he had resigned office that he sent off to the *Times* a copy of the second letter he had written to Salisbury before he (Salisbury) could receive it. By sending in his resignation from Windsor and not informing the Queen that night of what he had done, he was guilty of a serious breach of official etiquette; and by sending his resignation to the *Times* before it had been accepted by the Queen, he greatly aggravated his offence in the eyes of Her Majesty.

By this step Churchill irretrievably smashed his political career and future. When a man of Churchill's cleverness makes so terrible a blunder, he will, in after-life, advance all sorts of ingenious and plausible

excuses to palliate or to explain away his mistake, and Churchill's subsequent explanation of his conduct was that he had forgotten Goschen. I am quite satisfied that the existence or non-existence of Goschen had nothing whatever to do with his resignation. There was some mysterious reason other than political behind Churchill's renunciation of office. His volcanic temperament and quarrelsome nature all through his life involved him in personal and social controversy and turmoil. His combative nature had antagonised during his short tenure of office many individuals and influences who would be only too pleased to strike a blow at his reputation. The excessive strain imposed on a somewhat fragile physique by his intense and continuous application to his duties had unbalanced his nervous system. He had in the immediate future to meet a grave combination of trouble and personal antipathy, and to this ordeal he had to oppose an enervated physique. I believe the idea occurred to him that the best method by which he could extricate himself from his difficulties and start afresh would be to dissociate himself wholly from office, and take a short rest abroad. His present and impending troubles would during that time probably diminish, and if, as he thought not improbable, the Unionist Party did not prosper in his absence, there would be a disposition to take him back ; but I wholly repudiate the theories started by certain of his friends and admirers that his resignation was for the purpose of bringing Salisbury to his knees and enabling him to reconstitute a Government on more Radical lines out of the new Unionist Party. Though he pooh-poohed at the time the warning to which I gave expression and tried to minimise the antipathy which his indefensible action

would create in the party, he was far too able a man not to appreciate subsequently the soundness of my advice and warning. He was never the same man again, either in vigour or in intellect. He had an almost hopeless position in the House of Commons : his action had been such that no politician of influence or respect would care to serve under him or with him ; they knew that they would be and were expected to be the mere jetsam and flotsam of his imperious will and irreconcilable moods.

Churchill's head secretary, Moore, was a very able man and devoted to his chief. Moore was originally in the India Office, where he established a high reputation in the Political Department as a writer and adviser. Having a competency of his own and being by instinct and tradition a strong Tory, he left the India Office and, on my suggestion, became Salisbury's private secretary. Salisbury was greatly pleased with him, but when Churchill became Secretary of State for India he so begged for Moore that Salisbury considerably gave him up. Churchill at once recognised his great worth, and he became his trusted factotum. Moore was in despair over his resignation, and he could never adequately explain or understand it. He so took to heart the political suicide of his chief that his health became seriously affected, and he died shortly afterwards.

There is, therefore, strong cumulative evidence that Churchill's sudden desertion from his post was not a thought-out scheme, but was due to a sudden and ungovernable impulse. What made the impulse ungovernable I do not know, but I am certain it was not caused by his differences with the War Office and Admiralty.

With all his faults, Churchill possessed a fascination

of his own, and angry and irritated as one could not fail to be from time to time by his unjustifiable vagaries and fits of temper, a few minutes of his charming conversation and manner would rehabilitate him temporarily in one's good-will. To those he disliked I admit he was grossly offensive. His capacity for work, his concentration of purpose, his perception of the future and his powers of speech were quite extraordinary when we recollect that they emanated from a young man who had only seriously taken up politics during the past five years. He had the elements within him of a very great man, but his tantrums and outbursts of animosity against individuals made him an impossible chief or colleague. On thinking over his life, his failure and his death, one laments that there was not a good fairy at his birth to infuse into him those lesser but necessary moral qualities without which neither capacity nor even genius can make its permanent mark on the affairs of the world.

CHAPTER VII

SALISBURY, as was anticipated, accepted Churchill's resignation, and at once opened negotiations with Hartington to come into office and bring some of his colleagues with him. But the reasons which, on the formation of the Government, prevented the Liberal Unionists from taking office still held good. Hartington, however, believed that Goschen, who was more than half Tory, might be induced to take the vacant office of Chancellor of the Exchequer. He was better qualified than any politician in Great Britain for such a post. As an economist and financier he ranked very high, and some of his writings, especially those on foreign exchange, were generally accepted as text-books by the financial world. Gladstone had excluded him—or rather, he had excluded himself—from the Radical Government of 1880-85, and he had gone as Ambassador to Constantinople, where he established for himself a new reputation. Upon questions of franchise, taxation, the maintenance of naval and military establishments and Home Rule he was heart and soul one of us, and after an exchange of opinion with Salisbury he took Churchill's place. We thus gained as an addition to our depleted Front Bench a speaker who, from his readiness of reply, intellectual equipment and logical power, was a real tower of strength in debate.

At this time, when Salisbury was much worried by the consequences of Churchill's escapade, a

melancholy incident occurred which affected him deeply. Northcote (then Earl of Iddesleigh) felt very much his declension in political weight and authority. He had hoped—and in that hope he had been much encouraged by Lady Iddesleigh—that he would on Gladstone's resignation become Prime Minister. Neither he nor his family would recognise his diminishing vitality or the reduction of mental power associated with it. The Foreign Office then required a Minister of quick apprehension and decision, and Iddesleigh was obviously unequal to the work he would there have to conduct. Salisbury felt it was incumbent upon him to make some change there, but he hated, being an exceptionally kind man, to do anything which could be construed as a slight upon the dispossessed Minister. Iddesleigh came to the Treasury to discuss matters, and his old trouble—heart affection—seized him as he was entering the Prime Minister's room, and he suddenly fell down dead in the doorway. Salisbury was very unhappy; he had been too long associated with Iddesleigh not to know and appreciate his loyalty, wide knowledge and great adaptability, and he felt that the pressure he had been compelled to bring upon his old colleague had possibly shortened a very useful and valuable life. I wrote to him expressing my deep sympathy, and I got a most feeling reply. Amongst other things he said he did not know what a cursed trade politics were until he looked on the dead face of his old colleague.

Lord Salisbury took over the office of Foreign Secretary, still retaining his old post and duties as Prime Minister—a heavy double task which severely strained even his capacity for work. Smith left the War Office and became First Lord of the Treasury

and Leader of the House of Commons, and Stanhope came from the Colonial Office to the War Office, Knutsford succeeding him in the former place. Goschen was not in Parliament, but a vacancy occurred in Liverpool through the death of its member, Mr. D. Duncan. It was supposed to be a safe seat, and Goschen was selected as the Unionist candidate.

Smith gave his usual Parliamentary dinner to his colleagues and associates. The Queen's Speech was read and discussed, but as the result of the Exchange election was to be known that night we sat up to hear what we believed to be a certainty—the return of Goschen. The knowledge that next day, at the opening of Parliament, he would be seated on the Treasury Bench was to all of us a ray of comfort. The news was a long time coming, and when it arrived, to our amazement and perturbation, we learned that Goschen was beaten by seven votes. The turnover of votes by which he was defeated had nothing to do with Home Rule, but was caused by the deep-seated indignation in Liverpool created by Churchill's act in including a German company in the mail contract for the conveyance of mails to America.

I cannot pretend that we were a cheerful company when we dispersed. Next day we had to meet the most dangerous and unscrupulous political combination of modern days. Our leader had deserted us on the very eve of battle, our Chancellor of the Exchequer had been suddenly and unexpectedly defeated at the poll, and the health and eyesight of our Irish Secretary, Hicks-Beach, upon whom the brunt of the assault would be made, were steadily deteriorating. Yet Smith did not for a moment

lose his equanimity or reassuring manner. He knew that in speech and expression he was no match for Parnell, still less for Gladstone, but so inspired was he by his sense of duty and the magnitude of the issues at stake that his confidence in the ultimate result never, even in this dark hour, wavered. He warned me that Churchill would probably make a very violent attack on naval and military expenditure and that I must be prepared to follow him, as Stanhope had only just taken over the War Office and he (Smith) must reserve himself. I had, from the moment that I knew of Churchill's retirement, carefully prepared myself for a defence of my Department, and the case was so strong and so plain that I had not any doubt that I could carry the House with me, especially as the whole Unionist Party was deeply annoyed and affronted by Churchill's behaviour.

The debate opened much as usual, but Churchill at the last moment changed his tactics. His speech was mild and unimpressive ; but the one point upon which he dwelt was that the proper method of keeping down naval and military expenditure was to cut down aggregates and not to go into details. Gladstone heartily supported his proposition on the ground that the expert officers of the Navy and Army knew so much more about their business than the Treasury officials as to leave the latter at a hopeless disadvantage. I had reason to know, both officially and personally, that this method of cutting down Navy and Army wants prevailed all through Gladstone's administration. Ultimately his colleagues in 1894 so rebelled against his doctrine that he was forced to give up the Premiership and leave political life.

I have always been an economist as regards public expenditure, but my idea of economy is not to mar or counteract the result of past or sanctioned expenditure by refusing to make it effective by a denial of fuses which are necessary for the explosion of a shell, of the ammunition which alone can make a gun offensive or of guns without which a warship is a useless and extravagant target. If you are not prepared to make good the programme you announce, you have no right to announce it; but the announcement allays public uneasiness and is a salve to the consciences of those who want their country to be capable of self-defence. On the other hand, I quite agree that naval and military experts are apt to open their mouths too wide and to ask for more than can reasonably be given them. They do not recognise that public opinion, the likes and dislikes of a large section of the community, though intangible, are obstacles just as difficult to overcome and regulate as the most tangible of material forces. During the late war we learned and have recognised the truth of Napoleon's maxim, that on the battlefield moral forces in comparison with material stand in the relation of three to one; but the same idea holds good, though in another shape, during peacetime. No Government can permanently ignore the popular trend of ideas and opinion unless it wishes to be effaced. It must either carry public opinion with it or go. If the issue is clearly and impersonally raised and argued on broad national grounds, a strong and determined party will probably carry public opinion with it; but the issue must be put in such a form that all who wish to can understand. The worst of all policies in connection with military establishment is a make-believe policy—to launch

a programme and then to starve it. The public trust to the programme, but when it fails to realise the expectations associated with it, it is the sailors and soldiers and not the Treasury who are blamed for the poor results attained.

The Address was ultimately carried by 383 to 270, but the debates upon it were so protracted that it was clear that the Coalition Government would be impeded and brought to nullity in the House of Commons by interminable obstruction and talk. The waste of time, even in the debates upon the Address, was so wanton that the Speaker had to descend from his attitude of Olympian serenity and interfere. The first work which it therefore became necessary for the Government to undertake and carry through was to strengthen the procedure for closure. At that time the powers of the Government to conclude debates or assured decisions was almost nil, and to those Parliamentarians accustomed to the modern methods by which a Bill even of the importance of the Irish Home Rule enactment can be sent up to the other House with the greater part of its contents undiscussed and uncriticised, it would seem incredible that the business of the House of Commons could have been carried on with the very meagre resources for checking irrelevant talk and obstruction which in the eighties were at the disposal of the Government. Our proposals were very mild : the closure could only be imposed by a majority of 200 or a majority of over 100 when the minority was under 40. But mild as were our suggestions, they were combated with the utmost pertinacity and violence of language.

During the debates upon the Address there was one thing clearly established besides the necessity

for increasing the power of closure, and that was that the reformed House of Commons looked upon expenditure from a standpoint very different from that adopted by the Parliaments of 1832 to 1885. The House of Commons during that period was largely dominated by middle-class ideas. Free trade and reduction of expenditure, especially upon naval and military establishments, were the twins of the Manchester School incubation. The middle classes gained little by such expenditure, but they rebelled against the taxes necessitated by it. The wage-earning classes were in no sense so generally hostile to such outlay, and many of them benefited by the demand for the material and manufacture of the munitions of war.

Joseph Chamberlain was the first politician of eminence who had the foresight to see and act upon the change of opinion in the electorate, and he more than once, even at this early stage in the life of the newly enlarged constituencies, warned me that any attempt at a general reduction of establishments would not be popular and that the miserly doctrines of the Cobdenite-Gladstonian school were not held in esteem by the newly enfranchised voters. At first I was sceptical of this advice, but in the next few years I found out that he was absolutely right. Churchill's resignation of the Chancellorship of the Exchequer upon the ground of economy would have had a much greater effect in the mid-Victorian Parliaments than it had in 1886, and the subsequent campaign he tried to carry on died of inanition. How this change in electoral public opinion helped me I will subsequently relate.

We had barely got the Address through Parliament when Beach's eyesight became so bad that he was

forced to resign the Secretaryship for Ireland. He had faced with his usual equanimity the double onslaught of Parliament—from the Unionists for not taking more summary measures against outrage and agitation, from the Parnellites for ordering the constabulary officers not to hesitate to shoot, if by such action innocent lives could be saved. I shall never forget the pathetic scene in the Cabinet of the announcement of his resignation to his colleagues. He was broken in health, he was nearly blind, his financial affairs were very embarrassed ; yet under this combination of trouble and worry he had resolutely held on to an odious post which he might in the first instance have legitimately refused. Lord Cranbrook, as the senior Cabinet Minister present, in a few but admirably phrased sentences gave expression to what we all felt. Hard and even dour as Beach was, this spontaneous display of appreciative sympathy from his colleagues affected him deeply, and it was only by a strong effort of self-control that he was able to say in reply a sentence of thanks. We all thought that his political career was ended and that his life would not be much prolonged ; but, wonderful to relate, a change in treatment and perfect rest so improved his eyesight and rehabilitated his health that in two years he was back amongst us, and subsequently for a period of over twenty-five years took a most prominent and successful part in the public life of the country.

The selection of his successor was no easy matter, but Salisbury without any hesitation put his nephew Arthur Balfour into the vacancy. The appointment took us all by surprise. Balfour had not been long in the Cabinet, and though known to be a very clever man, his tastes and habits had concealed even

from his intimate friends the rare combination of intellectual, physical and moral qualities which lay behind his apparent dilettanteism. The Irish members treated his appointment with hilarious ridicule. To think of sending a philosophical "daddy-long-legs" to curb and keep in order eighty-five more or less determined Irish M.P.s was a joke of the first water. The Unionist Government had signed its death-warrant by this absurdity. The confident forecasts of his failure were not confined to Nationalists; the Gladstonians were equally sure of the futility of the appointment, and with the characteristic imputation of motive so engrained in the Parliamentary lobbyists it was insinuated that the appointment was in reality a job of the Prime Minister to secure a highly paid office for a nephew.

The history of the House of Commons for the next four years is really a record of Balfour's marvellous Parliamentary performances. How, with the assistance of a capable Irish Law officer, he kept the whole Home Rule Party, even when officered by such giants as Parnell and Gladstone, first at bay and then in subjection, how in speech and tactics he beat them daily in every encounter they provoked, how he broke down lawlessness in Ireland, and in this achievement became the first man in Parliament, how he ridiculed and trampled underfoot as dung the foul personal allegations made against him, how his wonderful performance changed the malice and fury of the Irish members into first a feeling of respect and then of admiration and regard for his personality—these things are they not written in the records of Parliament? No Parliamentary feat, in my experience, either in sustained brilliancy,

determination or success, approximated to what Balfour achieved, and if his career subsequent to his leaving his Irish post had been associated with a continuous exhibition of the same qualities, he would have ranked equal if not superior to any of the Parliamentary giants of bygone days.

This performance was the more remarkable, as throughout his tenure of office he was unable to rely on the co-operation of the two distinguished Irish lawyers, Gibson and Plunket, who for years past had been the mainstay of the Unionist Party. Gibson and Plunket were both physically and mentally very noticeable men. Both early in life became white-haired, and this snow-white hair surmounting strong and athletic frames and ruddy countenances made a contrast between and a combination of the attributes of youth and old age that was very attractive. Both were very good speakers: Gibson loud, imperturbable and effective; Plunket very uneven, but in his day he rose to a very high standard of polished and persuasive eloquence. They were great friends and the most amusing of raconteurs, especially in the stories they told of one another. Gibson had a wonderfully powerful voice. Men on the Front Bench opposite told me that an hour of Gibson's speaking seemed to daze them. His terrific voice seemed really to affect their brain and thinking power, and the chaff amongst the journalists was that if you wanted to hear Gibson properly when speaking in the House of Commons you should go into the central lobby between the two Houses of Parliament.

Early in life Plunket and Gibson were travelling in France on a river-boat. Amongst the passengers was a lady with two very pretty daughters. Gibson

was anxious to make their acquaintance and was fidgeting round them. His knowledge of French was limited. Coming up to Plunket, he said, "Can you tell me what is the French for landscape?" Plunket, guessing what was in his mind, said, "*Tire-bouchon*." Gibson advanced, placed himself close to the lady, and in a voice of thunder said, "*Quel magnifique tire-bouchon*." The poor lady rose in alarm and took refuge with her charges in the centre of the boat, where she was safe from the assaults of this white-haired Boanerges.

Gibson, however, had an equally good story against Plunket. When he was about forty years of age he was one evening at the Garrick Club. Two men next him were discussing ages, and they asked him if they might guess his. He said, "Certainly," and they put him at fifty-six. He went upstairs to the smoking-room and found there a party who were also discussing ages, so he told them that the two men who tried to guess his age were sixteen years wrong, upon which one of the more curious of his audience said, "At what age did they put you?" He said, "Fifty-six," whereupon there was a unanimous chorus of "You *are* a well-preserved man for seventy-two."

In 1885 Gibson became Lord Chancellor of Ireland, and in 1885 Plunket went up to the House of Lords. Their presence on our Front Bench had been a source of real jollity to their colleagues, and when taken from us and deposited in the Upper House we much grudged that assembly the possession of these two jovial Irishmen.

A Bill to increase the powers of the Irish Executive was a first necessity of the situation. Would the Radical wing of the Liberal Unionists support such

a proposition? "Coercion is no remedy," was only a short time back a Liberal watchword. Balfour and Smith met the Liberal-Unionist leaders, and after some consultation it was agreed that a Coercion Bill would be supported by them if it was associated with a Bill for improvements in land tenure of the position of the Irish leaseholders, and that this concession was to be connected with certain other benefits to yearly tenants. The compromise was a fair one; each party in the Coalition conceded something they did not like to the common cause of maintaining the Union, and in this very difficult negotiation, which was the foundation of the subsequent Parliamentary co-operation and alliance of the two parties, Smith's rare sagacity and negotiating power smoothed down the friction of bygone antagonisms.

The strength and elasticity of the new alliance was at once tested when Smith, as Leader of the House, asked for the suspension of the Standing Orders of the day for the introduction of the proposed Coercion Bill. It so happened that the first motion on the notice paper which would be swept on one side if the Government carried their proposal was one relating to the abolition of the Welsh Church. Bright came into the House and took up his seat on the bench immediately behind Gladstone. I watched him carefully when Smith was speaking. Would he, the great opponent of Church Establishments, consent to a motion for the postponement of an attack upon such an institution in order that what he had so often denounced, viz. exceptional legislation in Ireland, might be introduced? The division bell rang, and Bright, carrying his leonine head with more assertiveness than usual, got up at once and

walked straight into our lobby. The effect was electrical, the whole Radical wing of the Liberal-Unionist Party followed, and we had the time of the House by a majority of 349 to 260. The first round was handsomely won by Smith's resolution, and now a new and untried young pugilist, Balfour, stepped into the ring.

CHAPTER VIII

A PARLIAMENTARIAN of exceptional experience, in talking of Balfour's powers of speech, which he rated very highly, said it was curious the contrast there was between Balfour as a speaker when introducing a subject and when speaking in criticism or in reply. In the first case his speaking was indifferent, both in arrangement and heartiness ; in the latter he was inimitable. The criticism was a just one. Whether from lack of preparation or carelessness, Balfour generally seemed bored by his own exposition ; put him on the defence, and his whole intellect seemed to expand and to revel in the demolition of his opponents.

His opening speech for the Criminal Law Procedure Bill was poor, wanting in facts, badly arranged and lacking that inspiration which the rank and file of a party expect when they are asked by their leaders (I borrow a modern military term) to "go over the top." We looked glum and felt despondent. The debate went on for some days, and then another being, though the same Arthur Balfour, summed up the debate. Completely master of his case, brilliant, incisive, he made mincemeat of his opponents' facts and arguments, and sat down amidst the uproarious applause of our young men, and, largely owing to this speech, the first reading was carried by 361 to 250.

Reply, not exposition, is clearly Balfour's forte,

and one reason for his extraordinary power in the House of Commons when Irish Secretary was that in nine cases out of ten when he spoke he was replying to and repelling attacks. He used greatly to vary his methods of defence. If he had a good case he was moderation itself ; if an indifferent or bad case he would interpolate a few stinging personalities. The incensed Irishmen then dropped their case in order to pummel the Chief Secretary, a general row resulted, and afterwards a good division ensued.

The session of 1887 was a ding-dong fight between those who wanted to demonstrate that the House was unmanageable and incapable of doing effective legislative work so long as it had 86 Irish irreconcilables in it, and those who were convinced that, by determination and the utilisation of the powers in reserve, the Home Rule bogey could be reduced to its proper dimensions. The session was a very severe physical strain upon the Ministers. The House sat from January till the end of September, and the daily sittings did not terminate, as they do now, an hour before midnight, but almost invariably ran into the small hours of the morning. Smith led us admirably ; he was absolutely unfailing in his touch of the pulse of the House. His " pounce " for closure was never refused, and though he was howled at by the extremists, the great mass of the House knew that the use he made of the powers of terminating debate were reasonable and just.

Smith was no talker, but essentially a worker. His example and his brevity of speech converted the House into a workshop rather than a talking-shop. The House of Commons is very imitative. If its Leader be a great orator and verbose, verbosity becomes the fashion of the House of Commons. If the

Leader be no orator and brief, then brevity and conciseness of speech become the order of the day. I own that I should like to put a drastic time-limit upon individual speakers. Such a restriction would be automatic in its continuous improvement of speaking; padding and reiteration would of necessity gradually disappear, and that conciseness and concentration of diction which was the glory of the Shakespearean era would gradually supersede the sloppy and expansive verbiage of the modern politician.

In addition to the Coercion Bill we carried a heavy Irish Land Bill, the Lords' amendments to which proved no easy obstacle to overcome, and a Coal Mines Bill of a progressive and liberal character which Mr. Henry Matthews (afterwards Lord Llandaff) handled with masterly skill.

Goschen's Budget was also a success, though it was somewhat humdrum in its proposals; but the knowledge which the Chancellor of the Exchequer exhibited in his voluminous survey of the financial position showed to the House that in our Financial Minister we had an expert of the highest standard with an adaptability of knowledge and of debating power which few, if any, of his predecessors possessed.

Churchill found himself in a hopeless position. Sometimes he tried to help, sometimes he tried to upset the Government, but his influence with the mass of our party was irretrievably gone. He got a Select Committee appointed to look into Army expenditure, of which Sir Henry Fowler was chairman, and there he made himself very odious, especially to Edward Stanhope, Secretary of State for War, whom he heartily disliked. Both he and Fowler seemed to think—or, at any rate, pretended to think—that there was corruption and malversation of

funds in the management of the Army Votes. The War Office officials were very severely and—as I thought—very unfairly cross-examined on these lines. They were capable men who knew their business, and they so completely refuted the insinuations made that Churchill did not press next session for a reappointment of the Committee.

One hot day in July 1888, when Churchill had been particularly aggressive upon the Committee, Stanhope and I thought we might have a little relaxation and go up to Lord's to see the Oxford and Cambridge cricket match if our votes were not likely to be required for an hour or two. Whilst we were talking over the chance of a division, the adjournment of the House was moved by a Radical member. He wished to call attention to the case of Miss —, who, it appeared, had been accused of philandering in the streets by a police constable. The lady in question denied the allegation, but the magistrate believed the policeman and in consequence addressed a few caustic words of advice to the lady. The case seemed to us so trivial that we felt sure no division could be challenged on it, and up to Lord's we went. On our return we found, to our surprise, that the Government had been beaten in a small House by 153 to 148 on the question of adjournment. Churchill was the cause of this defeat. He waited for the Home Secretary, then denounced his refusal to reopen the case, and carrying with him some twenty of our young men, succeeded in putting the Government in a snap division into a minority of five. This proceeding did not improve his relations with his old party, especially as in some legal proceedings which this case initiated the attitude of the Home Secretary was quite justified.

At the end of the session the Unionists had won all down the line. They had carried all the legislation to which they attached importance. In debate the combined speaking-powers of Hartington, Chamberlain, James, Goschen and Balfour had proved more than a match for their opponents. From the physical strain of this session Smith never recovered. I was young and tough and had only a minor responsibility upon me, but I was dead tired when the prorogation came. The only ill effect from which I suffered was that the continuous late hours and want of sleep killed some of my teeth, and I subsequently found that this is not an uncommon experience of those who pass through a similar ordeal.

In the middle of the session there was suddenly sprung upon the Government a private notice which was the precursor of much trouble and ultimately resulted in the celebrated Parnell trial by Special Commission. A series of articles had been written in the *Times*, entitled “ Parnellism and Crime.” They were written with great knowledge and ability, and they did unmistakably connect the organisation of which Parnell was the chief with the organised outrage and murder in various parts of Ireland. So far they did not excite much popular commotion, for they only reiterated what was constantly said both in Parliament and on Unionist platforms. Then the *Times* began to publish what were alleged to be facsimile letters written in Parnell’s handwriting in connection with outrage, and this series included one letter in which he was made to express approval of the murder of Cavendish and Burke. Parnell at once denied the authenticity of these letters and demanded a Select Committee of the House of Com-

mons to prove the truth or falsity of these statements. The Government naturally declined to accept such a proposition. A Select Committee on a subject such as this must necessarily be largely composed of partisans who cannot in a moment of tense political strife be expected to act with the decorum and impartiality of a properly constituted law court. Moreover, the Courts of Law were open to Parnell if he wanted to clear himself from the charges made.

The publication of these letters made a great stir. It seemed almost unbelievable that a paper like the *Times* could publish documents so damning in their contents unless they had previously convinced themselves that they were authentic. Parnell's known caution and dislike of outrage discouraged in the minds of those who knew him best the theory that the letters were genuine, but many of the Unionists firmly believed in his guilt, and this belief was encouraged by his reluctance to take legal proceedings against the *Times*. That newspaper was ultra-Unionist in its sentiments, and its unswerving support of the Coalition Government was a political asset of much value.

Two Unionist Members of Parliament, Sir Charles Lewis and Mr. Staveley Hill—both members of the legal profession—one night dined together. They discussed the situation over a bottle of port, and finding no satisfactory solution of the deadlock between Parnell's denials and the *Times'* asseverations, thought that a second bottle of port might help them to elucidate the difficulty, and so it did. The second bottle suggested that these criminal imputations upon the character of a Member of Parliament might easily be interpreted into a breach

of Parliamentary privilege. "Let us summon the Editor of the *Times* to the bar of the House of Commons as guilty of an infraction of Parliamentary privilege, and then he, being in the House, will be able to produce his proof of Parnell's guilt." So delighted were these two at this solution of the difficulty that they not only made up their minds to take this course next day, but they sent to Dillon, with whom they had had some altercation the previous day, formal notice that the Editor of the *Times* was to be summoned next day to the bar of the House of Commons on a plea of breach of privilege.

Smith was not informed of this folly until an hour before the meeting in the House. As soon as the two delinquents met Smith, he pointed out to them that if the question of privilege were raised in the manner they suggested, the only point to be settled by the House was whether or not the publications of the *Times* were a breach of privilege ; no discussion into the truth or falsity of the allegations could take place in a debate so limited. But these two gentlemen, having sent their notice to Dillon, could not withdraw from it, and, to the annoyance and disgust of the Front Bench, the motion was made.

The Irish members, with the exception of Healy, thought that the motion was some trap, and did not know what to do ; but Healy's alert intelligence at once realised that if the motion were carried, it could only result in the House of Commons censuring the *Times* for its articles, and that such censure would most seriously damage the reputation of the leading Unionist journal, and he therefore welcomed the suggestion. Many of our younger members were at first in favour of the motion. "Let us have the matter out," they said, "and the sooner the better."

After a desultory debate of an hour or two the Government moved the adjournment of the debate, which was resumed next day. Edward Clarke, the Solicitor-General, spent the whole night in an investigation of precedents, and in a convincing speech he proved next day that breach of privilege was not intended to cover and did not cover this case. We had a long meeting of the Government in the morning, and there was absolute agreement that there should be no Parliamentary investigation into the matter. Clarke's motion that "the House decline to treat the article as a breach of privilege" was carried by 317 to 233. Gladstone, on the other hand, strongly advocated a Parliamentary Committee.

The notice made by Lewis and Staveley Hill did the Unionist Party much harm in the country, for those who were not behind the scenes could not understand why the Unionists ran away from a motion made by two prominent members of their party, when the object of that motion was to clear up the alleged complicity of Parnell in outrage and murder. If it had not been for this clumsy and uncalled-for interference by two private members in a matter which they did not understand, I do not think the Government would have been compelled next year to set up the Parnell Commission.

I never saw Smith so put out as he was by this unwarrantable interference with his duties as Leader of the House, upon a matter which from its novelty and prominence required careful and prescient handling.

CHAPTER IX

So far the Coalition had done well in the House. It held together, though there were signs of a wobbling amongst some of the weaker-kneed of the Liberal-Unionists. Eight Liberal-Unionist Members withdrew from the Eighty Club, and at a great entertainment given by the Reform Club a large number of Conservatives were invited and came. The speech-making during the recess was interminable and incessant, but by letter and speech the new combination more than held its own.

In the autumn we had a very nasty riot in Trafalgar Square. The South London workers, under the leadership of Mr. Burns, marched into the Square with the apparent intention of having a row. In the mêlée which ensued Burns took so prominent a part that he afterwards figured in the police court and was sent to Holloway Gaol for a term of imprisonment.

Burns, whom I got to know fairly well afterwards, is a pleasing personality with plenty of courage and good ideals. In office he became a bureaucrat of the most uncompromising character. There is an amusing story told of him when interviewed as President of the Local Government Board by the Archbishop of York and Mr. Keir Hardie upon some matter in which they wanted his Department to take action. Burns rode the high horse of departmentalism and laid emphasis upon the impropriety of the Local Government Board embarking on the enterprise they suggested. Keir Hardie said little till they were in the street, and then, turning to the

Archbishop with a twinkle in his eye, he remarked, " Did you hear him upon propriety? Who would have guessed that only a few years back I had to hold on like grim death to the coat-tails of the Local Government Board to prevent it from breaking the heads of all the police inspectors in the neighbourhood? " In the course of a long political life one passes through a good many phases of surprise and even amazement, but Burns's attitude in the war with Germany has always seemed a mystery. A born fighter, a hater of cruelty and oppression, a lover of children and dumb animals—how was it possible that a man so constituted did not jump at the opportunity of striking a blow against brutality and outrage organised on a scale sufficient to make it, if possible, the dominant factor of the future civilisation of the world?

Outside the House of Commons the Irish members developed a plan of electioneering with which we had some difficulty in coping. Many of them were merely farmers, and they understood exactly the speech and argument most likely to influence agricultural constituencies. In a county election a number of them would be sent down and located in different public-houses, where they made friends, and many of them being by nature cheery fellows with a gift of the gab, they made an unpleasantly good impression upon the men they addressed. At first we were rather nonplussed by these electoral tactics, but the Primrose League came gradually to our rescue, and in rural districts a counter-propaganda was organised which was not unsuccessful. Home Rule was beaten in the eighties and nineties first by the disgust caused by the outrages on human beings and beasts, and secondly from a distrust of the use which the Roman

Catholic Church might make of its overpowering dominancy in Ireland. Since then more than a generation has passed away, and I often wonder if at the date at which I am writing the modern electorate is equally influenced by the same considerations.

The Colonial Conference was held this year, and I had to enter into close relations with the Australian representatives upon naval matters. They wanted a fixed portion of the British Navy to be permanently located in Australian waters, pointing out with force that in wartime, when the presence of these ships was most required, they might from naval exigencies in other parts of the globe be summoned away, and they wanted some guarantee that at the moment they most required protection the protection would be there. This is a proposition to which no Board of Admiralty could listen. On the sea, which comprises three-quarters of the world's surface, no one can foresee what the naval combination of nations against the British Navy may be, nor can the force it could concentrate, the plan of attack or the places it might assault be anticipated. The one and only principle by which this infinity of combination can be baffled is to have your own forces mobile and not tied to the four corners of the globe. We could not assent in advance to detaching permanently any portion of the British Navy during war to the Antipodes. On the other hand, if Australia wished to add to the British establishments by a special contribution, she might legitimately claim some control over the force to which she thus contributed. On this understanding we ultimately arrived at a satisfactory conclusion with the Australian naval authorities, of which I shall have something to say in another chapter.

At this conference I met Deakin, the celebrated orator and statesman. He was a most attractive personality, without a particle of affectation, singularly well read and a born and cultured orator. I heard him make a speech at the annual Academy banquet. I do not suppose he had much artistic aptitude or training, but his utterances were more applauded by the Academicians present than any speech of a similar character that I can recollect. I met him on several occasions at long intervals. He changed little in appearance, and as years rolled on, his established reputation in no way affected his modest and sympathetic bearing. For a good many years when a young man he was a leading-article writer in the *Argus* newspaper. In that office his great friend and associate was Marcus Stone, the author of that wonderful novel *His Natural Life*. Marcus Stone was the Edgar Allan Poe of Australian literature ; but, alas ! he had the same failing, and his genius was marred and truncated from the same cause.

The year 1887 being the Jubilee of Her Majesty's reign, it was celebrated with general rejoicing, and in London the ceremonial was most effective when Her Majesty, surrounded by her family, went with much circumstance and pomp to Westminster Abbey to return thanks for the blessings conferred upon her and her Empire during her long and prosperous reign. All the sovereigns and potentates of Europe were present or represented, and the scene in Westminster Abbey was one of unique splendour and interest when the Queen, supported by her family, moved up the nave to take her place upon the throne facing the chancel. There were many fine manly forms and handsome faces amongst the Royalties thus clustered around their illustrious kinswoman, but the figure

which both in the procession and Abbey dominated everybody was that of the Crown Prince of Germany (afterwards Frederick II). In his white cuirassier's uniform and glistening helmet which specially became his towering height and magnificent figure, he looked a veritable Paladin, and his deep blue eyes, tawny beard and unostentatious demeanour gave true expression to the noble spirit within. His charm of manner was as remarkable as his rare physique, and of him it can truly be said that so long as he was alive "the age of chivalry was not dead." But even at this time the seeds of the fatal malady which so inopportunately removed him from the throne of Germany a year later were apparent to the close observer, and the warning constantly conveyed to us that "in the midst of life we are in death" was never more effectively brought home than by the sudden removal of this splendid figure through the malign influence of an incurable disease from the position he was so specially qualified to fill.

The extraordinary dignity of the scene in the Abbey was largely due to the demeanour of all the Royalties present, who were very numerous and of all nationalities. It is part of the inherent training of Royalty to be taught to adopt an attitude of statuesque immobility during any function of importance. They are part and parcel of the ceremony and must comport themselves as such. I lament that some of the modern young women who have been suddenly elevated into positions of importance do not realise this necessity, but seem to think that when put in places of prominence at a ceremony their main function is to whisper to their neighbours and to exchange giggling salutations with their acquaintances.

CHAPTER X

WE most of us are born and endowed with certain inherent instincts. These instincts may be developed and strengthened as our life goes on from the environment in which we move, or that surrounding may have an opposite effect, as it may truncate if not obliterate the instinct with which we originally started. I belong to a critical family—critical not in the sense of ill-nature or depreciation, but from the idea that by a close examination of things as we find them and of methods in vogue for the management of such things we can probably substitute improved methods and obtain better results. Throwing this critical instinct into politics and into the administration of offices and services connected with political life, I found long vistas of possible improvement in the departments with which I have been connected.

The shape in which I have always tried to mould my criticism is not that of destruction or obliteration of existing methods, for good of some kind is almost invariably found in long-established practices and precepts, though they may have outlived the intention for which they were originally established. My effort was always in the direction of adapting what I found to modern ideas, and if possible thus to blend together efficiency and tradition.

The few months during which I was First Lord of

the Admiralty in 1885-6 convinced me that a great deal of the administrative gear of the Navy was antiquated and expensive, and that with little or no increased expenditure an immense advance in efficiency could be achieved by adapting newer methods. All my Naval Lords concurred in these views, and the two Parliamentary Secretaries with whom I was associated, Ritchie (afterwards Chancellor of the Exchequer) and Forwood, both first-class men of business, were emphatically of the same opinion. I must endeavour in a few sentences to review the causes then contributing to naval inefficiency.

Iron or steel shipbuilding had only been introduced into the Navy some twenty-five years back. The change had been gradual and continuous, but the dockyards were apprehensive of, if not hostile to, its absolute dominance. The establishments in the dockyards were very redundant so far as numbers of workers in wood were concerned, but, on the other hand, they were very deficient in the machinery necessary for the rapid construction of steel hulls. Until quite recently all propelling machinery and boilers were made by contract. To bring the dockyards up to date, so far as shipbuilding was concerned, meant a large discharge of superfluous workers—a very unpopular and hostile task—and the expenditure of a large sum in the acquisition of new machinery—a proposal equally unpalatable to the Parliamentary economist. This double object, with ten dockyard representatives in Parliament, could only be achieved by making it unmistakably clear both to the House of Commons and the public that in its results it would greatly diminish the cost of shipbuilding in the Government yards, and thus save the dockyards from the fate which was the result of the findings of

a Special Commission, viz. that they should cease to be building yards by being confined solely to repairs. I am now only alluding to the larger features of dockyard life ; later on I will specialise more in detail as to what had to be done.

At this time the cost of a large vessel when built in the dockyards averaged 45 per cent. above its original estimate when presented to Parliament. No large vessel had been completed under five years. Slow and costly as was shipbuilding in the dockyards, the ships, when completed, had not infrequently to wait many months for their guns, and even when at length they did get their guns, not infrequently they were without the necessary ammunition. The life of a big warship was then much longer than it is now, but it is no exaggeration to say that even then in many cases one-third of the life of a ship was consumed before she was ready for commission. This dawdling was largely due to what I have described as the "make-believe" ship programme, under which a large programme is flourished before the eyes of the public, but a wholly insufficient sum is yearly devoted to its progress. The cost of the supply of guns and ammunition for the Navy was borne on an Army vote for which the War Office was solely responsible. The transfer of this vote to the Navy, and with it the sole responsibility for the adequacy and custody of naval ordnance, was an obviously urgent reform, but the War Office authorities were strongly opposed to this displacement. It necessitated a large transfer of patronage and of officers' houses and store accommodation from the Army to the Navy, but after a strenuous fight the Admiralty won and obtained control over and responsibility for the ordnance they required.

MOBILISATION

At the great naval ports were centred the paraphernalia connected with the commissioning and mobilisation of war vessels. Sometimes these vessels were merely individual reliefs, sometimes they constituted a whole squadron; sometimes they were old vessels in reserve, sometimes vessels fresh from the builders' hands. All the ratings, all the victualling, all the guns and ammunition for this momentous work were supposed to be at once ready and available at each port for all vessels which were either refitted at the port or attached to it. But little, if any, attention had been given to the all-important question of whether these local organisations were equal to the emergent duty, if the number of men and ratings in the old hulls (for there were then no naval barracks) were adequate to man the ships requiring complements or if the reserves of guns and ammunition were sufficient to arm them. The hurried attempt at mobilisation in 1885 which resulted at first in chaotic disorder was gradually straightened out, but with an active and alert enemy we should have been in a real quandary in the early stages of war. Dockyard reform in its wider sense meant the reorganisation of these naval arsenals in all that related to the resources of men, ammunition, victualling and stores, so as to bring them up to the maximum requirements of all the vessels available for service.

DESIGNS OF FIGHTING SHIPS

If the dockyards were slow in turning out ships, the battleships, when turned out, were a motley herd and incapable of manœuvring as a fleet from the disparity in their speed, displacement, armour,

shape or gun-power. In 1885 there were twenty-one armoured ships building and completing in dockyard—an enormous number of ships when we consider the amount of the annual Estimates sustaining them. Of these four were turret-ships with low displacement, low speed and no secondary armament, but heavily armoured. They steered abominably and were always a danger to the vessels next them. There were six battleships with a high speed, heavy secondary armament, but with no side armour. There were two battleships with two 16·5" guns forward, on a very low freeboard, but with no armour or big guns abaft. There were two big cruisers with quadrilateral armament, and six smaller cruisers with side-armour but so low in the water that at full draught the side-armour was submerged. To manœuvre or handle successfully as a fleet such a heterogeneous mass was an impossibility. Moreover, there had been no manœuvres of recent years to test the capacity of the individual ships or to ascertain the altered conditions which high speed and long-range guns had brought into naval warfare. There were old theories still in force as regards blockade which absolutely broke down when subsequently tried under the new conditions of the day.

The strength of a fleet in one given year depends not so much on the Estimates for that year as on the results of achieved expenditure in preceding years. If a steady and continuous increase in tonnage of completed ships is made to the Fleet every year, a sudden reduction of the Estimates means a diminution of output and strength. On the other hand, if a huge mass of work which should have been completed in past years is taken in hand and finished, during the years in which completion is effected, the

Navy is strengthened, though the annual Estimates may be reduced. I was able in the first two years of my tenure of office greatly to increase the number of capital ships completed, but at the same time to reduce my Estimates. Whilst wiping out the huge liabilities of the past, we were careful not to commit ourselves unduly to any new or large programme of building until we had so raised both the rapidity and efficiency of our shipbuilding in the dockyards and of the manufacture of guns and other munitions of war as to be able to complete with certainty and within the time-limit the programme we laid down. But slow as had been our completion of ships, still their progress was much in excess of the gun-producing power of the country. Armstrongs were practically the only Government contractors, and both their establishment and that at Woolwich were inadequate for the increasing demands of the Navy. Until something like equality of production was established between shipbuilding and the various departments of the country, it was mere waste of money to begin ships which, when finished, could not be gunned.

This necessary delay gave us breathing-time for the reorganisation and readministration of our building, manufacturing and mobilising departments; but we were severely criticised during this delay by certain naval enthusiasts who looked more to the amount of the sums voted to naval purposes than to results which they obtained. Our building policy was ambitious, but if we could succeed in it we should confer a twofold benefit on the Navy, for by rapidly completing our programme when once started, we should not only quickly increase the fighting power of the Navy, but we should also so establish

public confidence in Admiralty promises and performances as greatly to help future administrations in obtaining the necessary votes from the House of Commons.

But building and commissioning ships rapidly was only a portion of the improvements we had in view. We proposed, when ships were completed, to test their capacity by manœuvring them in squadrons and subjecting them, so far as was possible in peacetime, to war ordeals. As regards the dockyards, or, as they should be called, our naval arsenals, the rapid mobilisation of an increasing fleet meant a thorough overhaul of all the existing machinery and resources for manning, gunning and victualling not only ships in commission but also those in reserve. Every contributing branch in our naval arsenal must be made adequate to the full demands upon it, so that no shortage in any minor department should delay the equipment of the whole. In a word, our idea was to abolish a fleet on paper and to substitute for it "a fleet in being."

Thus there was an immense amount of spade work to be done before we could effect a big start with the certainty of being able to bring it to a satisfactory finish; but I had a team of most capable and hard-working colleagues. Sir Arthur Hood (afterwards Lord Hood of Avalon) was, as I have before stated, one of the best administrators I ever met. He was not a popular man in the Navy on account of his reserve and shyness. Though he was a very handsome man, he had one eye blue and the other half grey and half blue. In talking to him, do what you would, your eyes came back to his demi-coloured eye, and he did not like it. Whilst conservative in his tendencies, he was very scientific in his attainments,

strict but thoroughly impartial in his appointments, absolutely fearless but with an intense hatred of gossip and intrigue. He was always reasonable, even when in opposition. More than once I have suggested to him changes of which he did not apparently approve. He would come back in a day or two after the conversation with a small piece of paper in his hand, for he was a very concise writer, and say, "I have been thinking over what you suggested. I still incline to my opinion; but if you wish the thing done, this is the way to do it," and on the piece of paper would be formulated all the steps necessary for the change. It was a real pleasure to work with him; he never went back on his word, and in trouble he was a rock upon which to rest.

Sir Anthony Hoskins was equally able, more adaptable and versatile, with perhaps less motive power behind him. Both in counsel and action he was always to be depended upon and his experience was wide and varied.

The Controller, Admiral Graham, was an excellent official, but he early felt the burden of his office and he did not like Forwood. He retired in bad health and was succeeded by Sir John Hopkins. He again was a first-rate organiser and reformer, the embodiment of common sense, and combined a strong will with a cheery manner. His craze was the blue water. Time after time his wish to go afloat was over-ruled, as he was considered to be indispensable for important work on shore.

Forwood (afterwards Sir Arthur Forwood) was a hustler of the first order. His ideas and schemes, which were big and continuous, were generally sound, but he was very maladroit with his pen. In conversational controversy, the hotter the debate the cooler

and more considerate he became. This is always an indication of strength of character, but unfortunately his fluent pen was always operating against him.

The weak spot in my team was Beresford. As I have already pointed out, his post (that of Fourth Sea Lord) was associated with heavy dull work which did not come before the public. He did not like his post of subordination. Moreover, he was neither by instinct nor training an office man; executive work and the quarter-deck were his *métier*. Soon after his appointment to the Admiralty he came in unpleasant collision with his naval colleagues.

There was no effective Intelligence Department at the Admiralty in 1886. Under the existing organisation each Naval Lord in the Admiralty is in personal charge of certain services and of certain classes of business, and the work of superintendence of an Intelligence Department was under the First Naval Lord. Hood had undertaken to reorganise and expand this service, which at that time was admittedly on a wholly inadequate scale. One day there appeared in a newspaper a long memorandum which almost from beginning to end was a violent diatribe against the Admiralty for its neglect in organising this department. Schoolboy expletives of the most pronounced character ran throughout this document, and to it was attached the signature of "Charles Beresford." The paper had previously been circulated in the Admiralty, but I do not think that any of my colleagues had read it. Beresford's explanation of the publication of this paper (and I readily accepted it) was that he left his rough copy of the draft in a waste-paper basket which someone abstracted and then put together. But whatever the origin of its promulgation, it created a feeling

of distrust and suspicion between Beresford and his colleagues which increased as time went on, for he did not like or do his own work, but was constantly meddling in the work of others. He had no Parliamentary business to transact in the House of Commons, as Forwood and I, by virtue of our offices, had to answer questions and take a leading part in debates.

The Naval Service, as a rule, is very reserved and secretive as regards its work, both administrative and afloat, and, in my opinion, this is one of its best characteristics ; but Beresford was always overflowing with spirits, and he had an uncontrollable tongue. Reporters were to be found by shoals in the House of Commons lobby, and his exuberant temperament and his love of conversational chaff brought him in constant contact with these gentlemen. He never divulged secrets or let out anything detrimental to the naval or public interests, but there were constantly appearing little notices about naval affairs in which his name figured, and which, as a rule, related to contemplated changes and reforms. More than once my official morning was commenced by a message that the First Naval Lord wished to see me. In would come Hood, looking very cross, with a small extract from a newspaper, and he would say to me, " Would you mind reading this ? " The extract was to the effect that a great change was about to take place in the organisation of the Naval Reserve and that Lord Charles Beresford had made some valuable suggestions on that subject. Hood would remark, " As you know, those papers have never been outside my office, and I have never spoken about the matter to anyone except you. Beresford knows nothing about them, and he has no right to

appropriate to himself in advance the merits of the change." I would then send for Beresford. Our irrepressible Charlie would come in all smiles, and I would show him the extract. He would say, "I cannot understand how that got in." I would point out to him that he must have been the source of the communication, and he would then say he could not recollect, he did not think he had said it, and the interview generally ended by his saying, "I will write Hood the nicest letter you ever read in your life, and that will make it all right."

Next week it would be another official who wished to see me, and in would come the Director of Naval Construction with a small cutting from a newspaper. He would hand it to me, saying, "Would you mind reading it?" It was to the effect that a cruiser of a new design in which Lord Charles Beresford had embodied certain views was about to be sanctioned by the Admiralty. The Chief Constructor would say, "Lord Charles has never seen those designs; they have never been outside my office; and I object to these remarks being made in advance about a design which I have not yet completed." I would send for our friend, go through the same performance, obtain more or less a promise from him that he would not talk in the future, but these little naval excerpts still continued to appear, and in every case Beresford's name was mentioned.

An atmosphere of friction was thus engendered right throughout the Admiralty which was very detrimental to the work which we had in hand, and I was very much puzzled to know what to do. The simplest course would have been to request Beresford to go; but to dismiss from the Admiralty a man of Beresford's reputation and popularity solely on

the ground that he was supposed to talk to reporters would have caused a storm of criticism and condemnation, for if there is one thing that the Press love it is an official who will unofficially communicate to them what is going on in the department with which he is associated. Moreover, Beresford was supposed—though quite erroneously—to be the chief reformer in the Admiralty; but if nothing was done it was not unlikely that my two senior Naval Lords would resign, as they were very indignant at a subordinate naval officer being allowed a latitude both of conduct and speech which would not have been tolerated unless he had been a Member of Parliament and a popular pet.

The difficulty, however, solved itself by Beresford's sudden resignation. A great deal has been said about that resignation, how it was brought about because he could not put up with old-fashioned bureaucratic ideas, that he protested against the inadequacy of the votes presented to Parliament and that he had a great scheme of shipbuilding (afterwards known as the Naval Defence Act) which he was in vain pressing upon his recalcitrant colleagues. There was no foundation whatever for any of these rumours. Beresford never protested to me against the inadequacy of the Estimates; if he had, I should have pointed out to him that we could not, under the existing conditions, spend more money on shipbuilding with advantage. He put forward no scheme for shipbuilding; nor, in fact, was there, so far as I can remember, any reform properly belonging to his department which we were not ready to consider and, if necessary, to promote. His resignation was due to a much more prosaic incident. He had taken a great interest in the Intelligence Department, and

we had worked out at the Admiralty a scheme of establishment and sent it on to the Treasury with certain rates of pay affixed to the new posts so made. The Treasury accepted our scheme in its entirety ; but they demurred to the scale of salaries, as they pointed out that they were higher than those which were drawn by the military officers in similar positions at the War Office. We thought the objection a reasonable one, and after consultation with my Naval Lords we accepted the Treasury's proposals. Beresford somehow or other got hold of the papers and wrote a most violent minute upon them, stating that he would at once resign if the Admiralty did not adhere to their original suggestion. I wrote across the paper : " All correspondence on this matter must now cease." Beresford consulted an intimate friend as to what he should do. The friend asked him, " Do you want to resign ? " and he said " No ; but what am I to do about my minute ? " and ultimately he, like the gentleman that he was, stuck to his minute and went.

I explained this very fully to my constituents in a speech at Ealing in February 1888, and though an attempt was made to stir up popular excitement on the matter, no one ever tried to raise the question in the House of Commons, and both my colleagues inside the Admiralty and naval opinion outside entirely endorsed what I had done.

Beresford remained for about fifteen months in the House of Commons after his resignation before he went afloat, and during that time he gave me a good deal of trouble. He was naturally chagrined to find that his retirement created so little stir in Parliamentary and naval circles, and this chagrin showed itself by his opposing right throughout the

Naval Defence Bill of the next year. When afloat he did some excellent work, and a few years afterwards he came back to Chatham Dockyard as Captain of the Steam Reserve. He then wrote me a long and most complimentary letter upon the reforms which had been effected at the dockyards, saying that he could hardly believe that such great improvements could have been achieved in so short a time.

In the subsequent stages of his career Beresford came into collision with Fisher, for whom he was intellectually no match. He was not a good controversialist, as he could not sufficiently concentrate his attention on the strong points of his case ; otherwise, I think he would not have come off second-best in this dispute. During his last command he was treated with marked indignity by the Admiralty—and unjustifiably so.

Beresford was a very lovable creature with boundless confidence and courage which he infused into those serving with him, and he was one of the most amusing and delightful of companions. All throughout his life he never had, so far as the Navy was concerned, any axe to grind other than to promote its efficiency. In the closing years of his life he conferred a great service upon the Navy during the most critical phases of the war. As soon as he realised the enormous number of small craft which the Admiralty had to maintain at all times of the year on different services he saw it was essential, if the health of the crews was to be preserved, that they should have an adequate supply of fresh vegetables as an antidote to scurvy, and he had a large share in organising an association known as the "Vegetables Products Committee." The object

of this Committee was to transmit gratuitously and regularly masses of fresh vegetables and fruit to all the naval ports which were in communication with outlying pickets, drifters, mine-sweepers and craft of that kind, and a circular was addressed to all persons who had kitchen-gardens asking them to send their surplus produce to an official, generally the secretary of the local organisation. Vegetables and fruit so sent were then packed in baskets with a special label and despatched free of cost in passenger trains to all naval bases. In the first year of this organisation no less than 13,000,000 lb. of vegetables and fruit were so distributed to the Fleet, and I have heard from naval officers of all kinds that this constant supply of fresh food was an inestimable boon to the Navy and kept the men in good health and spirits.

Beresford was one of those men so constituted that it was a foregone conclusion that in the course of his life he would make mistakes, and that not unfrequently when he had a good object in view would adopt perhaps a questionable method of procedure; but he was a loyal and true-hearted sailor, and I am sure that all who were associated with him were glad that his work and services were so generally recognised as to ensure a public funeral at St. Paul's.

Though he was a source of considerable trouble to me at the Admiralty, on the other hand he greatly enlivened our proceedings by his exuberant spirits and by acts not generally associated with the demure functions of a Lord of the Admiralty. He and Ashmead-Bartlett were always indulging in comical boasting of their physical prowess, and both professed to be great masters of the use of the single-stick.

One evening at Devonport, after we had dined on the Admiralty yacht, they were so chaffing each other, and Hood said, "Now, you two fellows must have it out with single-sticks." So we sent for single-sticks, but there were none on board. It was then suggested that the encounter might take place with umbrellas and high hats. The disputants after some persuasion agreed to this ordeal, and they both came up under a screen-awning with umbrellas and high hats. We examined the umbrellas and found that they were not their own, so we insisted upon each arming himself with his own *parapluie*.

The encounter which ensued was indescribably ridiculous. Ashmead-Bartlett was the more scientific player of the two, and in splendid attitudes he was slicing off Beresford's legs and arms. Beresford, being the better tactician, soon discovered that being hit on the legs with an umbrella did not hurt. He therefore concentrated his attention on Ashmead-Bartlett's high hat, which he knocked first on one side and then the other. Every blow on his hat upset Bartlett's monocle, which had to be readjusted, and the fighting went on until the hat was battered out of all shape and both umbrellas broken; and then the two Lords indulged in an unseemly wrestle, resulting in their both tumbling over one another on the deck. I am afraid some of the crew witnessed this performance. Hood laughed so much that I thought he would have had a fit, and though perhaps the incident was a little derogatory to the dignity of my Lords, it was very human, and I am not sure that we lost much by it in the estimation of those who were onlookers.

CHAPTER XI

IN preceding chapters I have laid great stress upon dockyard reform, and I hope I have made clear that such reform did not merely mean starting more effective and economical methods of shipbuilding, but embraced all the measures by which these great naval arsenals could be made thoroughly effective, not only in continuously and rapidly adding to the number of battleships afloat, but also in proving adequate to the task of converting the ships so built into really effective war machines. Dockyard reform, therefore, touched every branch of administration connected with the mobilisation of the Fleet and the conversion of that Fleet from a peace to a war footing. But the materials for great and sweeping reforms were ready to hand. The dockyard employees were probably the most efficient shipbuilders in the world, and the material bought by the Government was undeniably of the first quality. There were masses of redundant naval officers and men of all ratings and of marines located in every port for the emergency of war, but during peace-time the services of these men were not properly utilised. Many of them were located in old wooden hulls with nothing to do beyond polishing up and keeping bright these hulls and their fittings. There was in every port a considerable number of warships of all kinds in reserve, but by some extraordinary lapse in the regulations they were no man's child. When completed they passed out of the control or purview

of the Admiral Superintendent, but they did not come under the authority of the Commander-in-Chief until they were commissioned. If there was a gap in time between the two dates, they were left to deteriorate.

The work of reform which we undertook in connection with dockyards naturally divided itself into three categories :

(1) More rapid and economical shipbuilding ;
 (2) The maintenance and supervision of the vessels so built and of those which went out of commission but were fit for re-commission, by having nucleus crews placed on board whose duty it was to see that the ships to which they were attached were not allowed to deteriorate ; and

(3) The provision of a sufficient amount of supplies to enable this reserve of ships to be rapidly commissioned in time of emergency. These supplies divided themselves into three heads :

(a) An adequate supply of officers, men and all the necessary ratings. This entailed the utilisation and reorganisation of all the various reserves, both of officers and men, at the disposal of the Admiralty.

(b) The provision of the guns and reserves of ammunition necessary not only for the Fleet in commission, but also for those ships which in an emergency were available for commission ;

(c) The provision of the commissariat and food also necessary for the commissioning of these ships. As these articles were mostly of a perishable character, this latter duty could best be performed not by accumulating enormous stores, but by having running contracts with the great supply and purveying firms of the country.

It may therefore be fairly said that there was

scarcely a branch or a detail of naval administration which was not affected by what was known as dockyard reform.

In dealing with the first of these questions—the more rapid and economical construction of ships—we found ourselves unexpectedly stopped by part of a Report of a Special Commission. That Commission had been appointed by Churchill when a fit of economy was upon him, and was largely composed of representatives of commercial and financial firms. It was assumed that their knowledge would be of use in enabling Churchill to cut down establishments and thus reduce expenditure. Several important firms in the City were requested to name representatives, and Lord Rothschild was chairman of the Commission. He retired, and his place was taken by Sir Matthew White Ridley. Among the firms who were asked to name a representative were the well-known bankers Messrs. Glyn, Mills, Currie & Co. They had as manager an exceptionally able man, by name Harvey, who for many years had served in the Treasury and had been taken from that department by Messrs. Glyn, Mills & Co. Harvey, though a very capable man, was a doctrinaire, and his whole mind was permeated by the Treasury belief that no one could be trusted to supervise or bring down the expenditure of a department except an accountant. When our proposals for improved dockyard administration became known, Mr. Harvey, being a fluent and easy writer, undertook the task of drawing up the report of the Commission. The report of a Commission which was specially appointed to obtain outside information for the Treasury as to the best method of controlling expenditure became a panegyric of the very Treasury

methods which they were asked to examine and criticise, and our preliminary proposals were all framed on the reverse proposition to that which Harvey advocated.

We kept at the dockyard the Admiral Superintendents, but we associated with them civilians who were thoroughly cognisant of all the details of shipbuilding. We abolished the accountants who previously were supposed to be responsible for the shipwright's expenditure; but we turned over accountants to the shipwright, who was made responsible with this accounting assistance for the expenditure they incurred, and we further divided that side of the Admiralty which was connected with shipbuilding into two branches, (1) that of design, and (2) that of superintending the construction of the design, and we appointed the Director of Dockyards for the latter purpose. We were fortunate enough to secure Professor Elgar, a naval architect of very high standing, for the new post.

As soon as the report of the Commission of which Sir Matthew White Ridley was chairman appeared, I went to him and asked him if he was aware that that report upset the primary recommendations which the Admiralty had made for checking expenditure. He assured me that neither he nor the Commission had any idea that their report would have that effect. But my difficulties with the Treasury were increased, and, as I have before described, it was only under a threat of practical resignation on the part of the whole Board of Admiralty that the Treasury gave way and allowed us to try our experiment. But I was able to report to the House of Commons in the Navy Estimates of 1888-9 as follows :

“ CONCLUSIONS TO BE DRAWN FROM THE PAST

“ The diagnosis which our enquiries have enabled us to make of the past working of the dockyard system, suggests the following remedies :

That when a ship is laid down it is essential, if cheap and rapid construction be required, that the largest amount of labour that can be economically employed should be put upon the ship and kept there without undue interference till complete.

That no course can be more injudicious as regards the actual cost of building ships, or more likely to put their efficiency out of date when built, than to commence a large shipbuilding programme with insufficient funds.

That to employ properly the various trades and classes of labour, it is necessary to lay down large ships at intervals, and not simultaneously in the same yards.

That the more rigid the system of account, and the more items that are brought in as direct charges, the greater is the tendency of incidental expenditure to contract.

That if real financial control is to be exercised over shipbuilding and dockyard expenditure, it is essential that the control should be in the hands of men who understand the nature of work they supervise and of the expenditure they check. No official, whatever may be his aptitude, who is a purely accounting officer, can with advantage undertake, or have imposed on him, such duties.

By adherence to these simple rules in the future, to the efficiency of which the savings of 1887-8 testify, we hope ultimately to enable the dockyards to compete successfully, both in cost and rapidity of construction, with the private yards of the country.”

The application of these principles had in the building of the big battleship *Trafalgar* already

saved £85,000 in labour and £15,000 in material upon the Estimates presented to Parliament. We had also largely wiped off our liabilities as regards the ships which were building, and the dockyards were therefore becoming ready to make a new start in shipbuilding under the improved methods of control which we had established. We had also brought the condition of naval ordnance into a much more satisfactory state. To show the growth of demands in this branch of naval expenditure, in 1881-2 the total amount spent for this purpose was £418,000; in 1888-9 it was £2,177,000.

As regards the organisation of the Fleet for war and the utilisation of redundant men on reserve ships, we had made a very satisfactory start, and I was able to report on this part of the question in the following terms:

“ The main principle underlying the scheme has been to make each of the three great commands—Portsmouth, Devonport and Sheerness—as far as possible self-supporting, by dividing the whole country into three districts, and sending all men from the same district to the same port. To arrange that the various officers connected with the manning should man the ships under the superintendence of their respective Commanders-in-Chief, and to place these officers in direct communication with those in charge of the reserves.

The men having been called out in the manner provided by law, each Commander-in-Chief becomes responsible for obtaining the men he requires for the ships in his port without reference to the Admiralty.

The complements for each ship have been drawn up, and a new classification of the ranks and ratings made, which return will be issued quarterly.

These new arrangements have been tried experimentally at Portsmouth, and the Commander-in-Chief, in reporting the result, said :

‘The officers of the various dépôt ships have taken a great interest in carrying out the details of the scheme, and with a very satisfactory result. A signal was made at 1 p.m. on the 27th ult., and before 4 o’clock complete returns were rendered from each dépôt ship of the appropriation of petty officers and men for all ships in and preparing for the First-class Steam Reserve, the torpedo boats, and armed merchant steamers. It will be observed that the crews are in each case practically complete, and there can be no doubt that a great advance has been made towards the speedy manning of the Fleet in case of sudden necessity.’

It must be remembered that in this instance the officers of the dépôt ships have taken a strong personal interest in the scheme, being aware that it is novel and on its trial.

So long as the executive officers will personally give the time and trouble necessary to work out the details, there will not be any difficulty with the present forms in manning all available ships in the course of forty-eight hours.

With the object of placing our Reserves of Officers on a satisfactory footing, the lists of retired officers have been carefully examined, and all eligible for employment have been asked if ready to serve in an emergency. Steps have also been taken towards instituting a gunnery and torpedo course for retired officers, and for placing them, when called out for service, on the same footing as officers on the active list.”

This part of naval reform originated, if it did not necessitate, a vital departure in naval policy. Hitherto it had been the tradition and practice of the Navy to keep all reserve men and officers on

board ships. The opinion of the senior naval officers was hostile to the building of naval barracks in which to house reserve officers and men. It was believed that periods of stay on land in buildings would diminish that special individual aptitude of which the Service legitimately boasts ; but the old hulls in which these men resided were becoming unhealthy, and it was pretty clear from an enquiry into the physique and discipline of those so located that both deteriorated under the present system. The health of the men was indifferent, their discipline certainly relaxed and their handiness was not improved. The policy was therefore adopted of building naval barracks at all the great ports ; but this policy is open to a certain danger. There is always the risk that if you locate a large number of sailors—and above all, stokers—in barracks without the regimental system of officers and non-commissioned officers which enforces discipline in the Army, there is a likelihood on the part of the men to get out of hand, and this has been proved on several occasions, not only in our experience, but in the experience of all navies of the world.

The last time the ex-Kaiser of Germany visited Portsmouth he was shown some very large barracks which were in course of construction. He said to the Commander-in-Chief at Portsmouth, "How many men do you propose to put in those barracks there?" The Commander-in-Chief replied, "Four thousand." The Kaiser said, "That is an interesting but a somewhat dangerous experiment. We never put more than 1,200 in one barrack, and we think that is too much ; the number should be limited to 800."

Writing as I am now, in 1920, at the conclusion of a

war, with the naval and military collapse of Germany still impressed on one's mind, it is clear that the ex-Kaiser was right so far as the German personnel was concerned. One of the main contributing causes to Germany's total defeat in 1918 was the mutinous spirit shown by the men in barracks at Kiel. The Germans had attempted to safeguard their capital war-vessels from mine and torpedo attack by an elaborate system of subdivision. This system of subdivision prevented those vessels being habitable for large crews for any length of time, and therefore the men had to live on shore. To secure comparative immunity from mines they were consequently obliged to subject their personnel to exceptional temptations and risks. The material succeeded in surviving the ordeal of battle, but the psychology of the personnel collapsed. This is another illustration of the truth of Napoleon's saying that in wartime moral resources count for much more than material.

We further altered the whole system of steam trials. Previously they had been confined to a period of four hours, and this limitation of time naturally induced the engineer so to apportion mechanical to steam power as to give the maximum horse-power within a short period; but boilers deteriorate much more rapidly than machinery, and there always should be a boiler power in reserve. The Mercantile Marine were well aware of this necessity, and framed their steam trials accordingly. We substituted four days' steaming for four hours, and we also insisted that the vessels so tested should be at full-load draught.

Churchill did not propose to reappoint the Select Committee on Army Expenditure which sat in 1887 ;

but in place of that a Committee was appointed in 1888 to look into naval expenditure, and the attitude of the more active members of this Committee was not one of cavil or censure of the proposed expenditure, but of doubt as to its adequacy. Churchill was not on this Committee, and Campbell-Bannerman was appointed as chairman. Beresford was a member, and, no doubt, to some extent he initiated the ideas of inadequate outlay.

The Naval Lords came as witnesses before this Committee, and Hood was severely cross-examined as to whether or not the British Navy as then constituted was adequate to protect the interests of British commerce and of the British Empire. Hood retorted by saying, " Unless you tell me who are the enemies against whom we have to protect British commerce and the British Empire, I cannot satisfactorily answer your question." This reply upset his examiners, as there was a natural reluctance to mention specifically France or Russia as probable or certain enemies. Those two countries had at that time the largest navies next to Great Britain, and an alliance between the two countries was not only likely, but had already commenced. This examination of Hood, therefore, suggested a standard of strength which would enable us, assuming we were to come into collision with the Fleets of these two countries, to meet that emergency.

The Committee reported towards the close of the autumn session. It was a balanced, humdrum report drawn up by Campbell-Bannerman, and it took no strong line either as regards a reduction or expansion of the Estimates. A debate took place on the Navy Estimates at the close of the session. Beresford made a long speech, drawing a contrast

between the Fleets of France and Great Britain. I was able without much difficulty to show that he had greatly exaggerated the strength of the French Navy, and I also intimated that we were ready to make a new start and that our programme would be laid before Parliament in the ensuing session.

In the meantime I had been in communication with Salisbury and Goschen both as to the future standard of the naval establishments and as to the most efficacious methods of bringing the Navy up to the new scale of strength. The opinion of my colleagues, in which I entirely concurred, was that we should start from the point of bringing our Fleet up to a standard of strength equivalent to that of the combined forces of the next two biggest navies in the world. It was deemed impolitic to mention either France or Russia by name.

I was asked by the Prime Minister if it would take long to draw up such a programme, and Hood, with characteristic promptitude, when I put that question to him, said, "If you will tell me the nations whose known strength we are to equal, I will draw up the programme in half an hour." This he proceeded to do, and I submitted it to Lord Salisbury and a small Committee of the Government, and it met with their approval.

There were alternative methods by which we could work up to this new scale. We could either annually so increase our Estimates as to ensure that at the end of a given number of years we had got our establishments up to the necessary strength, or, on the other hand, we could fix the increase of establishments at once, and partly by increasing the Estimates and partly by borrowed money set in motion our full building programme and the expansions which it

necessitated. Salisbury decided on the latter plan, and Goschen gave a tentative approval to the finance which would be necessary to carry through that idea. As, however, those plans were inchoate, I did not think it advisable in any way to indicate them to the Select Committee, and when they reported they were not aware of the start which we proposed to make or of the financial methods necessary to give effect to it. As the Committee was only appointed to look into the Estimates of the year 1888-9, I felt justified in adopting that attitude of reserve towards them.

In totalling up the estimated cost of the new programme, we found it amounted to about twenty-one millions sterling. To those accustomed to the gigantic expenditure of the recent war this may seem a very Lilliputian outlay ; but in 1888 it was a huge expenditure, requiring very close supervision and apportionment, as there were few of the big private yards which then had experience of the building of warships ; there were only two firms in the country who rolled the heavy armour-plates required for warships, and the number of engineering firms capable of making the heavy engines required for battleships was very limited.

The methods of measuring the tonnage of the Navy and the Mercantile Fleet so differ that a comparison of the registered tonnage of merchant vessels with the displacement tonnage of naval ships would be very misleading ; but it is interesting to note that at that particular time the tonnage of the larger battleships was considerably in excess of the biggest merchant vessels. Now the conditions have become reversed, and the biggest Atlantic liners far exceed in their dimensions any warship.

We further decided that the period within which

the programme should be completed was to be five years, and that necessitated a very nice allotment and adjustment between the gun-factories at Woolwich and those of Armstrong & Whitworth, who were the only outside contractors available for the manufacture of heavy guns and ammunition. There then arose the further question—should our new programme be embodied in an Act of Parliament, or should it be left to the vagaries of annual Parliamentary Estimates? We were strongly of the opinion that we should try the experiment of putting our proposals in an Act of Parliament. By such means we could ensure that the necessary armament and ammunition would be forthcoming as soon as the vessels were completed.

In the last Estimate presented by Mr. Gladstone's Government in 1886-7 guns were provided, but the ammunition necessary for them was struck out, and in the addition made to the Navy in 1884 (forced upon the Government of that day by public opinion) there was no provision at all for ammunition or torpedoes. Having then settled all the main principles and procedure for giving effect to our new programme, we were able to concentrate our time and attention upon the many details which had to be settled. But, as I have said before, I had a very able team of colleagues. Hood, Hoskins, Forwood and Hopkins were a quartette whom it would be very hard to beat as regards either application, ability or experience. To these four must be added the names of Sir William White, the Director of Naval Construction, of Professor Elgar, Director of Dockyards, and Captain Fisher (subsequently Lord Fisher, Admiral of the Fleet), who was then Director of Naval Ordnance.

The last three men were quite the pick of their respective professions. I doubt if ever there was more concentrated ability and administrative push at the disposal of any public department than that which I at that time was fortunate enough to secure.

Every political administrator should have impressed upon him the inconstancy and instability of public opinion. It is a factor which should be ever-present in his mind when prosecuting reforms. However strong the general trend of public opinion in a certain direction over a given number of years may be, there are certain to be backwaters and intervals of reaction during this period, and the prescient public man should take account and advantage of these oscillations. All my public life I have been a lucky timeist—if I may coin such an expression—for I have been enabled to fit into the public sentiment of the moment that which I wanted to achieve. My good luck on this occasion did not desert me. The reduction and reorganisation of the dockyard establishments was a very unpleasant and unpopular task; but the temporary wave of opinion which Churchill had created on behalf of economy greatly assisted me, and I was thus able to get this most disagreeable duty accomplished before the inevitable change against economy took place. When that change occurred, I was able to utilise the fluctuation of public opinion for the prosecution of the plans which I had in mind for the improvement and augmentation of our Fleet.

CHAPTER XII

HER Majesty's Jubilee in 1887 was associated with a great naval display in the Solent. It seemed advisable to the Admiralty, if all the cost and trouble of bringing together so large an assembly of ships was to be incurred, that they should be tested in some way afterwards by naval manœuvres. The result of these manœuvres was clearly to show that the old ideas as regards close blockade were absolutely obsolete, for they had been largely founded upon the experience of the past, when a fleet was dependent upon tide and weather. Now all such limitations were swept away with the introduction of steam. It therefore followed that on those occasions when the weather was most detrimental to the operations of the blockading fleet, the opportunity would occur to the blockaded ships to escape. It was further clear that where the steam-power and speed of two fleets were about the same, if one fleet got a good start of another it might do irreparable damage, both in the destruction of commerce and the bombardment of seaport towns, before it could be overtaken and destroyed. These manœuvres were associated with certain farcical incidents, such as sub-lieutenants landing boat-crews and exacting heavy tributes from undefended seaport towns; but the general lesson they conveyed was so striking that it could not be ignored. The public, therefore, were further prepared by these manœuvres for an increase to the existing naval establishments.

Early in March 1881 I introduced the resolution upon which the Naval Defence Act was founded. Our proposals were very simple, though the finance connected with them was somewhat complicated. We proposed to lay down as quickly as was possible eight first-class battleships larger than anything that had hitherto been attempted, two second-class battleships, nine large cruisers, twenty-nine smaller cruisers, four fast gunboats and eighteen torpedo-gunboats. The total expenditure connected with this outlay was estimated to be £21,500,000, and it was divided into two sections—£10,000,000 for contract ships and guns was to be provided by loan repayable in five years, and the remaining £11,500,000 was to be borne on the Estimates of those five years. Very great trouble had been taken in drafting the resolution and Bill, Goschen devoting his critical intellect to a most careful scrutiny of the arrangement and phraseology of the clauses, and it was largely due to his help that I was enabled to carry the Bill practically intact right through the House of Commons, and our majorities increased as the discussions proceeded.

Upon the introduction of these proposals Churchill made a violent attack upon the whole policy of the Admiralty, and though he renewed that attack with less vehemence later on, he took no part whatever in the discussion subsequent to the second reading. The "Peace-at-any-price" Party, who were then strongly represented by Sir Wilfrid Lawson and others, fought the proposals to the end, but they made little impression upon the House or the country. On the contrary, the more our proposals were discussed and criticised the greater was the amount of popular support which we received. The one person who

systematically opposed our propositions was Beresford, though he never took part in a hostile division ; but he did his best right throughout to discredit the scheme which we put forward. In fact, so hostile was his attitude that a meeting of a number of distinguished Admirals was held under the presidency of Admiral Lord Clanwilliam, who was authorised by this meeting to represent to him that if he continued his tactics he would be repudiated by the Service generally. Historical accuracy and a sense of obligation to my Naval Lords compel me to make this statement, as, when our scheme became a pronounced success and the execution of it in all its branches was effected within a specified time, a claim was advanced on behalf of Beresford that the Act was in reality his work and was forced by him upon a reluctant Admiralty. Thanks to the thoroughness of the work of the Controller, Sir John Hopkins, the Director of Naval Construction, Sir William White, and Forwood, Financial Secretary, all the contracts and arrangements made in advance worked perfectly, and at the end of five and a half years the Admiralty had executed to the very letter the engagement into which it had entered to complete this vast new fleet within the period named.

This remarkable success immensely helped me and the Admiralty for the remainder of this Parliament, and in the subsequent years I got the whole of my Estimates, except one, through the House of Commons in one night's discussion. Confidence was re-established in the capacity of the dockyards to compete with the private yards of the country, the ability of gun-producing factories to supply ordnance equal to any demands which might be made upon them was proved, whilst the new organisation

which came into operation at the various ports for the mobilisation of reserve ships was straightening out very satisfactorily. I think I may fairly claim for my Board of Admiralty that the principles then laid down as regards mobilisation have never been materially changed, and though they have been greatly improved and augmented, those additions rest upon the basic principles which were then established.

To make an accurate forecast of expenditure spread over five years, including the necessary fluctuations in prices both as regards material and labour, was a very difficult task, but here again the Controller's Department came out extraordinarily well. In winding up the accounts there was an excess of £600,000 over the estimated expenditure of £21,500,000—a small percentage of increase in itself, but it was entirely due to certain alterations in the boilers and machinery which we had to introduce at the last moment.

As regards the designs of the ships, I felt safe, for we had taken into consultation the most able naval officers of the day, who, in a committee under Hood, examined and reported favourably upon the designs ; but there had been no similar committee to examine the details of the machinery and boilers. The boilers of the Navy had been giving great trouble in recent years, and I think this trouble was mainly traceable to the false system of steam trials which was then in force and which naturally induced engineers to make the boilers as light as possible and to cut down to the smallest limits their reserve power. Whilst we were in the middle of the discussion upon the Bill and after all the details of the vessels had been settled and agreed to by the House

of Commons, I became nervous about the adequacy of their boiler-power. A new Chief Engineer had recently|been|appointed at the Admiralty, Sir Albert Durston, a most competent man. He so far was satisfied, but I thought I must have further expert advice, and, after consultation with the Controller, he agreed to the appointment of three experienced naval engineers to report upon the adequacy of the boiler-power as provided in the specifications of the various vessels. They passed all the battleships as having the necessary reserve boiler-power, but they considered that at least 25 per cent. must be added to the boiler-power of the cruisers. This extra power had to be introduced at the last moment into the specifications of all the cruisers and small craft, and it was an extraordinary performance of those with whom I was working that they contrived to do this without materially modifying either the design or the tonnage of the vessels into which extra power was put. Outside the Admiralty no one was aware of this change.

On thinking over the constitution of the Board of Admiralty and the respective responsibilities of the various officials therein employed, I came to the conclusion that too heavy a burden was laid upon the shoulders of two men, the Director of Naval Construction and the Engineering Chief. In those days upon them rested the sole personal responsibility for the designs and the efficient steaming of the vessels when designed. This was a larger burden than any two men ought to bear, and I am glad to say that since then both these officials have advisory committees associated with the discharge of their work which in the past have proved of great value.

There is a great number of questions connected

with shipbuilding in which the experience of our Mercantile Marine is quite as valuable as that of any naval officer, and I hope that the happy and extraordinarily successful combination between the Navy and the Mercantile Marine during the recent war will bear permanent fruit, and that the Government of the day will in the future draw more largely upon this combined experience than they have done in the past.

During the autumn campaign I spoke at several places, and I was surprised to find how much the Naval Defence Act and the measures upon which it was founded were appreciated by the public. They realised that, with the increasing strength of the foreign navies, Great Britain must make up its mind for the future either to lower its standard of naval precautions or to incur a larger expenditure.

The discussions in the House of Commons and the speeches made outside brought out certain facts connected with naval administration which were creditable to the administration of our Admiralty. All our great battleships in the past had been completed within five years from the date of their being laid down. Some of the French ships took over ten years before they were ready for commission. We were further able to show that, whereas France had two francs in stores and establishments on shore against one franc invested in ships afloat, we had two francs afloat as against one on shore; and as regards our much-abused dockyards, it was shown that 12,000 men in our yards did more work than 22,000 in the French yards.

Churchill had pressed for a Commission to enquire into the methods of administration in vogue in the Navy and Army, and it was an open secret that

he was assisted in this move by Lord Wolseley, who wanted at that time to put the Navy under the Army. Hartington was chairman of this Commission, and he took evidence for two years. All the Naval Lords as well as myself were called up as witnesses before that Commission. The result was a triumphant vindication of the principles underlying Admiralty administration, and the suggestions of the Commission were, not that the Navy should be put under the Army, but that the Army should try to assimilate its administrative system to that which was in force in the Navy.

The outcome of the Naval debates in Parliament; the Report of the Commission; the sanction of the scheme of shipbuilding under the Naval Defence Act; the rapidity and ease with which effect was given to it, all tended to rehabilitate the Admiralty in public opinion, and those of us who were engaged in this work were pleased to find that not only had we succeeded in giving a real substantial increase to the strength of the Navy, but that in doing so we had also added to the popularity of that Service, and at the same time enhanced the confidence of the public in those who were in charge of it.

It is more than a generation since the Naval Defence Act became law, and the vessels it brought into existence have long ago become obsolete as fighters, and many have gone upon the scrap-heap without a record or any mark of war service. Late in the autumn of 1919 I was taken to Zeebrugge, and there, embedded in the channels of the harbour leading to the Bruges Canal, were three of my old cruisers, the *Thetis*, the *Iphigenia* and the *Charybdis*. They rested on the mud bottom of the port, their upper works, their gear and fittings were either shot

away or perforated and to the outward eye presented a sorry appearance of rusty decay and paintless obsolescence ; but they were the outward and visible sign of the most daring and successful naval adventure ever attempted ; they are the record of a feat of audacity, organisation and gallantry unsurpassed in the naval annals of the world. There they lie, almost mathematically in the positions they were planned to occupy. It is no easy matter, even in daylight, with cross-tidal currents and the ever-shifting sandbanks to be circumvented, to navigate in and out of this harbour ; but that these old crocks in the dead of the night, with every buoy and mark removed and under the appalling fire of hundreds of guns of every calibre, should almost mathematically, in spite of every obstacle human ingenuity could invent, have attained their exact objective is little short of the miraculous. And not the least part of the miracle was the evacuation by motor-boats to the vessels outside the harbour of the remnants of these crews through an indescribable and concentrated fire of guns. What these small craft did, first in marking out, buoys and lighting the waterway, and then in re-embarking and rescuing the survivors of a " forlorn hope," is beyond praise and almost beyond description. I reverently took off my hat to these three old derelicts ; they are the cenotaph of the undying gallantry and irrepressible resource of the British sailor ; and on the actual spot (where alone the incredible audacity of this feat of arms can be fully gauged) I humbly returned thanks that I had been permitted to belong to the race which had achieved this marvellous feat.

Before I part company with Hartington's Commission, it would be as well if I were to explain what,

at the time of their Report, was the essential difference between the War Office and the Admiralty system of administration.

In each there was a Parliamentary chief, who, under the existing political conditions, must generally be a civilian. At the War Office this civilian chief was associated with a military man who held the post of Commander-in-Chief, and the whole military organisation and the officers of the War Office were under the direct personal control of the Commander-in-Chief, with the single exception of the Military Intelligence Department, which, for some curious reason, was in direct communication with the civilian Secretary of State for War. The result of this system was that the civilian Minister could obtain little or no advice and initiation from the military side, except with the previous assent and approval of the Commander-in-Chief, and the sense of loyalty and discipline which pervaded the Army precluded junior officers serving at the War Office from putting forward for the consideration of the Secretary of State any ideas which did not meet with the approval of the Commander-in-Chief. There was, therefore, an absolute stoppage to free interchange of ideas between the Secretary of State and the great mass of our military officers at the War Office. This forced the Secretary of State back upon his civilian advisers, and, inasmuch as he was supreme, through his supremacy civilian influence was more or less dominant at the War Office.

At the Admiralty the First Lord of the Admiralty, though a civilian, was head of the whole of the naval services and establishments of the country, and in the exercise of that control he was assisted by a number of naval officers who occupied the posts of

First, Second, Third and Fourth Lords of the Admiralty. These posts were filled by the most distinguished and capable administrators the Navy could supply ; but they always regarded the First Lord of the Admiralty, and not the First Sea Lord, as their Chief. They had entrusted to them individually the control and management of certain branches of military service and certain establishments, but they were free at any time to communicate direct with the First Lord of the Admiralty ; and the First Lord, on the other hand, had the right of sending for them at any time and obtaining from them their views or their opinions on any questions connected with their department, even though such opinion might not be in agreement with the views of other Naval Lords. Each Naval Lord had a civilian staff under him for the purpose of helping him in carrying on the correspondence of his department ; but he was absolutely supreme over all civilian employees.

The result of this system was that naval opinion—particularly that of the younger officers—permeated naval administration much more than was the case at the War Office. There ostensibly the Army was under the control of the Commander-in-Chief ; but as the Secretary of State was cut off from direct personal communication with subordinate military officers, he was forced to fall back upon civilian advice, and thus civilian advice rather than military expert opinion dominated the policy of the War Office. No doubt this system has been modified recently ; but I think the general experience of all capable administrators is that it is impossible to combine the administrative and executive work of either the Army or Navy in the hands of one single man. Administrative work so differs from executive duties

that one man is seldom an expert in both, and the man who, from the possession of certain qualities, may be a first-class administrator not unfrequently is an inferior executive officer. On the other hand, the magnetic qualities associated with the direct leadership of a man are often a stumbling-block in the solution of complicated administrative questions. Previous to the great war this distinction was recognised by all foreign military Governments, and they always divided administrative from executive duties so far as military organisation was concerned; and it was with a view to drawing this distinction between the two that in 1904 the post of Commander-in-Chief was abolished in this country, and the duties which he discharged were distributed amongst the different officers of the Army Council.

At the Colonial Conference held in London in 1887 a special agreement was entered into between the Home Government and the representatives of the Australasian Colonies under which a joint financial responsibility was established between the contracting parties for the creation and maintenance of a sea-going squadron of ships of war to protect the commerce of the Empire in Australasian waters. The peculiarity of the arrangement consisted, not merely in the establishment of a financial partnership between England and Australia for this specified purpose, but in the apportionment of the liability so incurred. The cost of the squadron, composed entirely of cruisers and small ships, was estimated to be between £800,000 and £900,000, and our Government undertook to bear the whole cost of building, arming and equipping the squadron. The Colonies, on the other hand, undertook, when the vessels were commissioned, to bear the whole cost of their mainten-

ance up to a maximum of £90,000 a year. They also agreed to pay an additional sum of £35,000 annually for ten years as a contribution towards the original cost and construction. The ships were built and completed in two years, and at the termination of ten years the vessels became the exclusive property of the British Government.

The arrangement was not a perfect one, but it was a good stepping-stone towards the gradual establishment and development of an Oversea Fleet being maintained by our distant Dominions. There were a good many difficult points which had to be adjusted. I was fortunate enough to find amongst the Australian representatives Mr. Deakin, to whom I have already alluded, and Mr. Griffiths (who afterwards became Sir George Griffiths and a Chief Justice). The latter was a singularly able negotiator, and it was largely due to his influence, not only at the Conference, but subsequently in Australian political life, that ultimately a satisfactory and workable policy was established between the Admiralty and the Australasian Government.

CHAPTER XIII

IN the course of my official life I have come across many able business men who have either been partly associated with Government Departments or who, as outsiders, have volunteered to place their experience and capabilities at the disposal of the Government for the time being. There were two of this class who stand out prominently in my memory as possessing all the best attributes of business men in dealing with the questions of the day, but who also showed equal prescience in foreseeing the problems of the future. They were Mr. Ismay, founder of the White Star Line, and Mr. Mackay, now Lord Inchcape. They were remarkably similar in their aptitude, their methods of expression, their powers of concentration and the rapidity with which they could arrive at a decision. To have an interview with either of these two gentlemen was a real treat. Not a word was wasted or a second misused in irrelevant discussion : everything was to the point.

Mr. Ismay came to see me at the Admiralty to suggest methods by which Naval Reserves and the latent potentialities of the Mercantile Marine as a cruising force in time of war might be promptly organised and utilised. He was then building some new ships for the Atlantic passage, and he suggested that they should be so built and designed as to be capable of carrying guns, that the guns which they

carried should be stowed on board and that a certain proportion of the crew should be Naval Reserve men with officers, and by these means he calculated that, if war broke out suddenly, we should at once be able to convert for cruising and patrol purposes some of the fastest of our Mercantile Marine. The idea was an excellent one, and the Admiralty at once accepted Mr. Ismay's proposals, and the two big vessels which he was building were designed, manned and armed as he had suggested.

There is an amusing story connected with the inspection of one of these vessels. At the Naval Review in 1891 one of these armed mercantile cruisers was in the line of warships. The guns with which she was armed were mounted. As we knew the German Emperor was going to this Review, we thought it well to appoint a really capable gunnery officer who could explain the ballistics and range of the new gun which we had put on these cruisers and its capacity for quick-firing. This gun was a 4'9 quick-firer and was a considerable—I may say two years'—advance of anything in the shape of quick-firing guns which other nations possessed. Lieutenant Jellicoe (the present Admiral of the Fleet Viscount Jellicoe) was selected for this duty. The Emperor came on board with a very big suite of naval and military followers. The *Teutonic* had been built at Messrs. Harland & Wolff's yard, and Mr. Wolff, a member of that firm and also M.P. for Belfast, was with us. The German Emperor in his inspection adopted that attitude of Imperial omniscience which he thought it was becoming on these occasions to assume. I let him go round with the Captain of the vessel, as I knew he despised civilian First Lords of the Admiralty. Apparently

he took little notice of what he saw till he came to where Jellicoe was explaining the mechanism of the new gun. He became a little more interested, but he still maintained an attitude of comparative indifference. A few minutes afterwards Wolff came running up to me with a broad grin on his face. He said: "I have witnessed a most amusing scene. The Emperor apparently did not take much notice of that new gun; but the moment he turned a corner and thought there was no one but his suite near, and forgetting that I could talk German as well as English, he turned round and rated in the most violent language both the naval and military men round him. He asked how they dared let England get so much ahead of Germany in the way of quick-firing guns, and he ordered that the moment he returned to Berlin, a gun of similar capacity and of the same quick-loading properties should be made and the design sent to him."

The Queen took a great interest in the increase of the Navy under the Naval Defence Act, and she very kindly consented to launch two ships at Portsmouth in the year 1891. I was enabled to tempt her Majesty to undertake this task by pointing out to her that to launch two battleships in the same day was a performance which never before had been accomplished in our dockyards. She came and greatly enjoyed the ceremony, and her visit to the dockyard gave immense satisfaction to the Navy.

In the same year the French Fleet on their return from Cronstadt put into Portsmouth. It was very desirable to welcome them warmly in order that we might counteract the effect of the "entente cordiale" which recently had been established between the French and the Russian Navies. Her Majesty was

good enough again to exert herself. She not only received Monsieur Waddington, the French Ambassador, and the French officers at Osborne, but she came on board the yacht specially to say good-bye to them before they started. Monsieur Waddington and the French Admiral Gervais, both highly accomplished men, were delighted with the purity of her Majesty's French. It was old-fashioned, but very classical, and she expressed herself with a delicacy and crispness which delighted them all.

At the party at Osborne House the Queen was very anxious that her reception should go off well, and she therefore specially directed those gentlemen in her suite who spoke French easily to make themselves as agreeable as they could to the senior French officers. Admiral Lord Clanwilliam was then Commander-in-Chief at Portsmouth. He was very dark and swarthy, and he had a strain of foreign blood in him, his grandmother having been a Russian. He also spoke French very well. One of the Queen's equerries, in his zeal to welcome all foreigners, seeing this dark, distinguished-looking Admiral standing alone, went up to him and had an animated conversation in French with him. Finally he said to him, "I hope you are enjoying your stay at Portsmouth," whereupon Lord Clanwilliam turned round and said, "Who the devil do you take me for? Don't you know that I am the Queen's Commander-in-Chief?" The Queen was immensely amused on learning how her injunctions to her suite to make themselves pleasant to the foreign officers had been carried out.

On all these occasions, as First Lord of the Admiralty I had the advantage of being able to utilise the Admiralty yacht. I note that invarious

quarters an attempt is being made to abolish this vessel on account of its cost. In my judgment, it would be a very great mistake, so long as you have a civilian at the head of affairs, to abolish the Admiralty yacht. It gives a status, and it carries out a tradition in the Navy, and its abolition would cause a great blank if the hospitality of the Admiralty to naval officers at ports were transferred from the yacht to an hotel. It is difficult to over-estimate the value of the intimate personal contact between the Lords of the Admiralty and the higher naval officers at the dockyards which occurs through the institution of this yacht. The expense is relatively very small, and all the officers and men on board that ship are available in times of emergency for any service. I can only speak from my own experience as First Lord (and I held that post for a longer time than I think anyone else has done) as to the immense assistance which these visits were in carrying on one's duties. It is one thing to pass plans at the Admiralty; it is another thing to see them in working order.

Early in my tenure of office, by a piece of good luck I established quite a reputation as an expert of ships' designs. There were two first-class battleships built by my predecessors—the *Sans Pareil* and the *Victoria*—which were a great novelty in design. They had two 16·24 guns forward, but they had little or no side-armour. They carried a battery of ten 6-in. guns aft. These guns were not in casemates and there was but little plating round the battery—a bad arrangement, as if one big shell burst inside this battery, all the guns would probably be put out of action. The design was universally condemned by naval men, and I spent a considerable

time at the Admiralty in studying it until I knew almost by heart, so far as sketched designs were concerned, the distribution of space and armour and the disposition of the guns. One of these vessels had been commissioned at Chatham, and I went on board with the usual concourse of dockyard officials and naval officers which always accompanies the Board of Admiralty in its peregrinations round our dockyards. We came to this battery of 6-inch guns. I said, "There are armour plates round this battery?" "No," said the Captain of the ship; "there is no side-armour in this vessel." I replied, "I am sure there is." He then appealed to the Admiral Superintendent of the Dockyard. "No," said he; "there is no side-armour in this vessel." I said, "We will ask the First Lieutenant." "No," said the First Lieutenant; "there is no side-armour." I said, "Then send for the Gunnery Lieutenant." The Gunnery Lieutenant confirmed the statement that there was no side-armour. The First Sea Lord also said, "There is no side-armour," which was confirmed by the Controller. "Well," I said, "I am sure there is"; so ultimately they sent for the carpenter. On the question being put to him, he promptly said, "There is a 5-inch armour plating round all this battery." I judiciously retired from the scene of my victory, leaving each Admiral severely rebuking his immediate subordinate for his gross ignorance in not informing him of what he himself should have been personally cognisant.

I heard from my private secretary next day that my reputation had gone up considerably, as the story was very soon circulated.

There was also during the year 1891 a Naval

Exhibition held in the gardens close to Chelsea Hospital, which was an immense success. Unfortunately the weather was bad, but the public came in crowds and we had some splendid naval showmen. I also had a first-rate committee of retired Admirals who put their backs into the work, and the whole organisation as well as the catering was on a distinctly higher level than was associated with any previous exhibition. The year 1891 was therefore a red-letter one for the Navy.

CHAPTER XIV

DURING the years 1880-90 there was a considerable number of naval officers amongst the senior Admirals of exceptional ability and strength of character. The training and education of young naval officers were very hard and severe during the Early Victorian period ; but those who successfully passed through this ordeal were generally men of character and determination. During the time that I was First Lord of the Admiralty the transition from sails and masts to steam was completed. Many of the older iron-clads sailed as well as steamed, and the handling of these long, heavy men-of-war with single screws or manually-worked rudders was work requiring both nerve and determination. The men who came through this trial were both reliable and capable. I have only to mention the names of some of the leading Admirals at that time to show what exceptional capacity there was then in the highest rank of the Navy.

First and foremost, so far as sea-going qualities were concerned, was Admiral Sir Geoffrey Hornby, a born leader of men, a wonderful manœuvrer. It was never his good fortune to be engaged in any serious war operations, though his advance up the Dardanelles in 1878 was marked by great determination and foresight. Sir Edmund Commerell, V.C., was a man of charm and exceptional daring and was a special favourite with the sea-going service. Lord

Clanwilliam was another veteran with a fine record of service and endowed with exceptional strength of character. Sir William Dowell was equally excellent, who under a soft and almost retiring manner concealed a remarkable aptitude for always getting whatever he wanted done quickly and effectively. Sir George Willes and Admiral Baird were, again, two most competent seamen and administrators.

Of the younger men the most remarkable was Admiral Tryon, whose career was cut short by the terrible accident which occurred to the *Victoria*, his flagship, when he was Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean. Tryon was a man of marked ability and resource. In all the naval manœuvres in which he commanded he invariably outwitted his opponent, and he had a very high reputation in the Navy for his foresight, his thoroughness and his resource. When he was Admiral of the Naval Reserves he had a scheme which required Treasury assent as it involved certain expenditure, and a Committee was appointed to go into the subject, the representative of the Treasury being Sir Reginald (afterwards Lord) Welby. Welby was almost hypochondriacal in his dread of disease and illness. The meetings of the Committee were held in Spring Gardens. Before the last meeting, at which it was thought that Welby might be recalcitrant, Tryon had all the windows of the room thrown open. It was a very cold day, and the atmosphere became icy. In came Welby, who at once remarked, "How cold the room is!" "Yes," said Tryon; "it is better to have a cold room than to catch typhoid fever. The smells in this neighbourhood are so awful that the only preventive is to keep all the windows wide open." As soon as Welby heard this, he thought that the quicker the matter

was settled the better would he preserve his health. Tryon thus obtained an involuntary assent to his scheme, which otherwise would have been spun out, if not rejected.

The cause of the catastrophe in the Mediterranean in which the *Camperdown*, Admiral Markham's ship, cut the *Victoria* in two has never been thoroughly elicited. Tryon was masterful and he worked all kinds of novel manœuvres in the Mediterranean. He told his captains that they were to obey his signals literally and afterwards he would explain to them why he made them. The signal which he made, his fleet being in two divisions ahead six cables apart, was one by which the two leaders must mathematically come into collision. Markham, the second in command, hesitated to obey the signal, and Tryon signalled: "What are you waiting for?" Markham then obeyed, with unfortunate result. What induced Tryon to make that signal will always be a mystery. At the time of the court-martial it was stated that Maurice Burke, who was his Flag Captain, remonstrated with him but was over-ruled. Markham was censured subsequently by the Board of Admiralty for obeying Tryon's orders; but, in my humble judgment, the decision was a wrong one. However, whatever the cause of the great catastrophe, it resulted in the loss of a big battleship, a most able Commander-in-Chief and a large number of officers and men. Moreover, it shook very much the confidence of the remainder of the Mediterranean Fleet in close manœuvring. The Admiralty took prompt measures to counteract this tendency by sending out another remarkable Admiral, Sir Michael Culme Seymour. He was an exceptionally fine handler of a fleet, and by his pluck, determination and coolness

very soon restored the nerve of the Mediterranean Squadron, and when he retired at the end of his appointment he left it in a high state of efficiency and self-confidence.

There were two distinguished officers junior to those I have just mentioned with whom I had very close personal relations and to both of whom I was in the past greatly indebted for the help which in times of stress and embarrassment they afforded me—Admirals Lord Walter Kerr and Lord Fisher. Although they were the antithesis of one another in character and demeanour, each well represented a certain tone and school of thought of the Navy. Kerr was the embodiment of accuracy, moderation and reliability. During the latter part of his career, when at the top of his profession, his decision or ruling upon any disputed question, either personal, disciplinary or administrative, was accepted without cavil by the whole Service. Cautious in making changes or reforms, he never went back upon his work nor stultified his previous utterance by pyrotechnic capitulations. For five years he was my head Naval Secretary and a rock upon whom to rest. He was as good afloat as he was in Council, a splendid specimen of disinterested loyalty and devotion to the highest demands of duty.

Fisher was a wholly different personality—strong, ambitious and go-ahead, and he made a rare splash in naval and other circles. Right throughout his career he showed instincts of genius, but, like most men so gifted, he was changeable and inconsistent. He was an extraordinary hustler and a marvellous showman. When controlled, he was an invaluable public servant; when uncontrolled, he was apt to be dangerous from his love of the limelight and the

ease with which he became obsessed with the fad of the moment. He was a great humorist and delighted to draw picturesque descriptions of his past work, always adorned with very strong and amusing expletives and Biblical quotations ; but he would be the first to laugh at anyone who appraised him by his own recitals. I knew him as Captain of the *Excellent*, then Director of Naval Ordnance, then Admiral Superintendent of Portsmouth, and finally as Controller of the Navy. All these promotions, which he well deserved, were made whilst I was at the Admiralty, and in these posts he did exceptionally good service. As an old friend and admirer I read with great concern the unfortunate letters which he published during the autumn and winter of 1919-20 headed "Sack and Scrap." These letters are a distortion of his own career and a libel upon the Navy.

Fisher did some very valuable work for the Navy, but he was in no sense an unfailing success. Some of his changes have worked well, some badly ; but in most cases they have been marred by the precipitancy with which they have been forced through. I will give an illustration of success and failure.

Whilst he was Director of Naval Ordnance he became associated with Mr. Vavaseur, of Armstrong's. Vavaseur was a mechanical genius, and between these two our naval ordnance was revolutionised, for whereas in 1884 we were by far the most backward Navy in Europe as regards breech-loading guns, in 1892 we were at least two years ahead of any nation both as regards the quantity and quality of new guns. Fisher may fairly claim the chief share in this extraordinary

feat, but he was during this time working under the supervision of Lord Hood of Avalon.

I now turn to a fiasco which might have been catastrophic, but which was entirely due to precipitate action.

Under the Naval Defence Act there were certain small vessels—torpedo-gunboats they were called—in which some difficulty was experienced in obtaining from cylindrical boilers the designated horse-power. The firm of Thornycroft, which was in my constituency, asked to be allowed to engine and boiler with water-tubes one of these vessels, viz. the *Speedy*, guaranteeing for three years the necessary horse-power. My technical advisers were opposed to this idea, but, with the assent of Hopkins, who was then Controller, I over-ruled them, and the contract was made. The experiment was a complete success. In the meantime I had left the Admiralty, and Fisher became Controller. The displacement of the *Speedy* was about 750 tons. The Belleville boiler was, I believe, tried in the *Sharpshooter*. Fisher then proceeded to put into the two largest cruisers ever built, viz. the *Terrible* and *Powerful*—twenty times the size of the *Speedy*—this same boiler, and having adopted water-tube boilers of this system and on this scale, he persisted in so boilering all subsequent cruisers in the same way. The pressure per square inch of the water-tube boiler is very much heavier than that of a cylindrical boiler, and every portion of machinery or packing coming in contact with this increased pressure ought to have been previously strengthened and tested by successive experiments. This elementary precaution was ignored, and as a consequence for years to come the steaming incapacity of our cruisers was

a naval byword. Later on, when I was Secretary of State for India, I was on a committee to try to adjust the differences between the Admiralty and the Chancellor of the Exchequer (who was then Beach). The difference arose as regards the dimensions of a new shipbuilding programme. Beach was very obdurate against the Admiralty proposals. Finally, turning to Sir Arthur Wilson, who succeeded Fisher as Controller, he said, "What boilers do you propose to put in these new vessels?" "The same as we now have," replied Wilson. "I am damned if you shall," replied Beach. He was right. A committee was subsequently appointed to report upon naval boilers, and they made various proposals which ought to have been adopted long before. From that day up to now naval boilers have worked well.

Though he had great social gifts, Fisher was too volatile in his judgment and too assertive in his self-advertisement and in his likes and dislikes of others to become the trusted head of a great Service like the Navy. As an administrator and organiser he will rank very high, but he was not equally successful as a reformer. His absorption in the idea of the moment made his grip of the future very fitful. He had, however, such a fund of latent originality and resource and driving power that it was a real pleasure to work with him, and I shall always regard as amongst the most memorable of my experiences my long official association with this remarkable man. He had the good luck to have a most capable and charming wife, whose unfailing sound common sense and judgment largely contributed to the success of his career.

CHAPTER XV

OF all the Admirals connected with the Fleet during my tenure of office he who has made most stir in the world is William Hohenzollern, the ex-Kaiser. I knew a good deal about him before he succeeded to the throne, and I was constantly brought in contact with him afterwards, both officially as First Lord of the Admiralty and from being on more than one occasion in personal attendance upon him. The Queen's elder daughters and some of my sisters were almost identically the same age, and the Queen was very kind in asking my sisters frequently to Buckingham Palace to talk to and play with the princesses of their own age. Thus my sisters came to know the Empress Frederick very well when she was a girl, and that intimacy continued during her lifetime. In consequence, we heard a great deal about the future Emperor when he was a boy and a young man.

The first occasion on which I met him personally was in 1878 at a dinner given by Lord Arthur Russell. He was then an unnoticeable young man except for his curt and brusque manners. Shortly after he succeeded to the throne he came over on a visit to his grandmother in 1889. He was then very much interested in the development of his Navy. To do him justice, it must be said that he had learned his lesson well. *Brassey's Annual* was at that time a semi-official record of naval performances, and he informed me that those *Annuals* were never out of

his room and that he knew them almost by heart. He spent a whole day at Portsmouth examining the various establishments and talking to the officers in charge of them. He created a very favourable impression. He was quick, he had great receptivity and the power of absorbing himself in whatever he was inspecting. I watched him with close interest, because we had heard a good many disquieting rumours as to his real character; but, so far as Portsmouth was concerned, he certainly after that visit left a favourable impression of his personality and ability. Two years later, in 1891, he came over for a second visit. He had in the meantime dismissed Bismarck and endeavoured to get into his own hands the whole power of Prussian autocracy. The deterioration between the man of 1889 and 1891 was remarkable. There was even then nothing natural about him; it was pose, pose, pose, all day long. I was in attendance upon him on that occasion, and he was then trying to unite all in one the rôle of Louis XIV, Frederick the Great and Napoleon. Though he had a certain amount of brusque joviality, he treated his own staff with an utter lack of consideration in the manner in which he spoke to them, the directions which he gave to them and the humiliation inflicted upon them if they did anything which he did not like. He had already developed a reputation for insincerity and untruthfulness. After his second visit Lord Salisbury told me that he looked upon him as the most dangerous enemy we had in Europe. He also added that he had never met a man with such a doubletongue.

On each succeeding occasion when I met him he seemed to have deteriorated more and more in character and morality—so much so that one can

almost trace the continuous inroads which his incredible pretensions and vanity made, not only upon his judgment and sense of proportion, but even upon his sanity. This process continued until there was not a particle of sincerity, truth or reliability left in his whole composition ; but he still retained a certain ability. He had receptivity, considerable power of expression, great capacity for work and an intense love of interfering with everybody and everything ; but, with the exception of his naval work, he was thorough in nothing.

As our relations with the German Navy at that time were friendly, it was thought advisable to make him an Admiral of the Fleet. The moment he got that honour he took upon himself to attempt to influence the movements of our Fleet and to direct our policy. Time after time, through the Foreign Office, I used to receive at the Admiralty messages from Berlin. Every such message or every such suggestion was always framed with a view to bringing us, if possible, into collision with the French. I had a very able staff, and at the Admiralty we knew naturally a great deal more about naval affairs than the Emperor, so we quietly put on one side his suggestions. He complained to Salisbury that he was not accustomed to receive the Parliamentary answers that he got from the British Admiralty. He was constantly warning the Admiralty that Armstrong's steel was bad and suggesting that we should go to Krupp's. We subsequently found out that he had a large pecuniary interest in that institution. On another occasion he sent a message as to the improper disposition of our Fleet in the Mediterranean, and the suggestion he made was one which, whilst strategically wrong, must have had

the effect of annoying the French. I think the last message that I received from Berlin was in connection with an imaginary coup-de-main which the Prussian Foreign Office pretended France wished to make upon Spezzia. At this particular moment the relations between Italy and France were much strained. There was commercial and industrial war going on between the two countries. Berlin informed the British Admiralty that they had certain evidence that the French were about to attempt a coup-de-main at Spezzia by landing there two army corps, that if this occurred the peace of Europe would be endangered and a general European war provoked, and that in the interests of peace it was therefore advisable that the British Navy should stop this movement. The procedure suggested to us for nipping this movement in the bud was to order the British Fleet up to Toulon and then to threaten it with bombardment. I may add that the Duke of Edinburgh, the Queen's second son, was at that time in command of the Mediterranean Fleet. We had at the Admiralty means of gaining accurate information on any big movement of French transports in the Mediterranean. We therefore ignored this insidious suggestion. Moreover, the lie of the Bay of Toulon and the location of the forts made bombardment impossible with the naval guns of that date.

To show how German history is written, I will just quote an extract from the memoirs of Prince Hohenlohe, who for some time was Chancellor of the German Empire :

“ A Franco-Russian intrigue has been set on foot, by which Spezzia was to be, or still is to be, seized by France. This would lead to war with Italy, and

in the meanwhile we should be busied with Russia. This war between France and Italy would be extended so as to give back to the Pope a part of his temporal power. If it then came to a war of the French Republic intervening on behalf of the Pope, Austria would be unwilling to enter the field for Italy and against the Pope, and the German Catholics would also not take part in the war with enthusiasm. Russia counts on this, and France seems to agree with her. England is said to have ordered the Duke of Edinburgh to bombard Toulon in case France took Spezzia. On this the scheme seems to have gone to pieces." (Vol. II, page 386.)

Neither Salisbury nor I for a moment believed that there was any truth in the allegation here made ; but it will be observed that Hohenlohe states that England ordered the Duke of Edinburgh to bombard Toulon in certain eventualities. That is what the German Government *wished* us to do, but what the English Admiralty declined to do. If we had been fools enough to adopt the German suggestion, we should have had war with France, and I have not the slightest doubt that subsequent investigation would have shown that the story of France preparing to take Spezzia was a pure German falsehood.

About this time proposals were made to us by Germany that we should obtain certain concessions with the approval of the German Government in Zanzibar and the Hinterland behind it, provided we gave up Heligoland ; and, after a very full investigation by the Admiralty into the advantages and disadvantages of the retention of Heligoland, the Admiralty agreed to its cession to Germany. If subsequent events have shown this to have been a wrong move, I must bear the main responsibility for it.

Heligoland has figured prominently in naval operations during the whole of the past war, and its conversion by Germany into an almost impregnable fortress has naturally induced people to think that the policy was short-sighted which handed over this island to Germany. But the other side of this question has to be considered. It is quite clear that if we had retained Heligoland, the House of Commons would never have assented to its being sufficiently fortified to be self-defending. It is true that it is a good roadstead, and, in fact, the only anchorage from which Kiel Canal can be blockaded, but submarines and torpedo-destroyers have made impossible the form of blockade which alone can be carried on from the Heligoland roadstead. An advanced naval base or position which cannot protect itself by its own fortifications must either fall into the hands of the enemy or be protected by naval power ; but the disposition of the naval forces necessary to protect it may be fatal to the general strategy of the war. To have kept any large portion of our fleet in the immediate neighbourhood of Heligoland would, in the existing circumstances of 1914 to 1918, have been to invite naval disaster. Heligoland, therefore, must fall into the hands of the Germans unless we had first so defeated the German Navy as to make it impossible for any considerable portion of it to emerge from its protected bases.

Very early in my Admiralty experience I had a good illustration of the futility of an advanced and defenceless naval post. We seized Port Hamilton when we were on the verge of war with Russia. It was an island the possession of which on the map seemed to offer special naval advantages ; but we could not fortify it, and three successive Commanders-

in-Chief at Hong Kong agreed that its retention was a serious incumbrance to the free movements of our sea-going fleet in those waters. We therefore gave it up. It may be urged that if we had not given up Heligoland to Germany in 1891, that island would not have been fortified, and that our long-range guns could have blown the island to pieces. That is perfectly true, but I doubt, even if we had accomplished that comparatively easy feat, if it would have had much effect on the ultimate naval issues in this war.

Looking back now, with all our recent knowledge, I think we were justified in 1891 in dispossessing ourselves of this untenable advanced naval post. But in giving it up to Germany we not only made a great concession to that country, but we also gave the strongest evidence of our belief in the reality of the friendship which Germany then professed towards this country. Whether it was due to direct action of the Kaiser, or to a change in the personnel of the Berlin Foreign Office, or whether it was accidental, the fact remains that from the moment we gave up Heligoland, the whole tone of the German Government changed. It became aggressive, hostile and insincere, and from that time up to now I cannot recollect a single instance in which Germany has behaved to us with either the courtesy or consideration which we undoubtedly received from other big countries in our international dealings.

Some years subsequent to the date of the period upon which I am writing I saw a good deal of Sir Horace Rumbold, our Ambassador at Vienna. He had a personal claim against an Indian Prince which he wished to discuss with me at the India Office. Sir Horace could speak with exceptional authority

upon the internal condition of Germany and the movements and agencies then in operation to shape and promote German aspirations and policy. He warned me that the hostility against England was steadily on the increase, and he so impressed this danger upon me that I asked him one day to be allowed to take him through the various classes of society in order to ascertain what was the origin of this almost universal antipathy against Great Britain. I took first the governing class, that is to say, those who were in civil authority, those who regulated the Army and Navy, and those who had influence in Court circles. As regards this stratum of society, he informed me that the feeling was universal that England was the nursery and home of political constitutional heresies, and that the doctrines which were preached and promulgated by English Governments and English Parliaments were the reverse of what they believed to be essential for the good government of a great nation. In other words, autocracy in its most undiluted form came directly into antagonism with the freer ideas of the democratic constitution.

We then came to the commercial and middle classes. The magnates of the commercial class were in competition with England and were anxious, if possible, to oust her from her previous position of superiority; but amongst the commercial and middle classes there was great resentment against England, particularly against *Punch*. Germany had suddenly sprung into wealth, and she had all the sensitiveness of the *parvenu*. The pictures in *Punch* of fat Germans smoking big pipes and drinking large pots of beer infuriated this class which had suddenly come into opulence and luxury, and he assured me,

though it sounded incredible, that this feeling of resentment did to a large extent permeate and mould their political views.

He then went on to the working classes. They were less unfriendly than the two classes above ; but they, too, were in direct industrial competition with England, and they were naturally largely influenced by their Press and what was taught them in their educational system.

Sir Horace then ended by saying : “ I now come to the really dangerous enemies of my country, viz. the teaching class of Germany.” And he declared—and subsequent investigation has confirmed his statement—that in the teaching class of Germany, from those at the head of the biggest universities down to the assistant masters of the elementary schools, all throughout were imbued with hostility towards England. The higher-class professor represented the English people as a decadent and played-out race, the British Empire was described as one created by fraud and chicanery, and it was further alleged that the jealousy of the English people was such that they would, so far as they possibly could, prevent Germany from having her fair share of the commerce of the world or, in fact, her legitimate place in the sun. I asked him what was the system of selection and promotion in the teaching services, and he assured me that they were practically all under the control of the Government, and he added that the Kaiser took great interest in watching over the appointment and promotion of teachers and professors, and that, so far as he knew, his influence was always thrown in the direction of those who were most irreconcilable against England.

These statements of Sir Horace Rumbold made a

great impression upon me. He was one of the most accomplished linguists that ever entered our Diplomatic Service ; he could talk both French and German like a native ; he had been living in Germany so long and in such different situations that he had an almost unrivalled knowledge of her institutions, the habits of the different classes of society and of her life, aims and objects. At the time he made that statement to me, although there were incipient developments of this hostility, those of us who were in office believed this antipathy to England was talk rather than business.

For more than a quarter of a century the ex-Kaiser ruled over Germany. It is now quite clear that during the latter part of this reign he was unceasing in his endeavours to stir up bad feeling against England. Whenever he wanted an addition to his fleet, that demand was always heralded by a violent newspaper outbreak against the British nation and its policy ; and whilst, on the one hand, he did all he could to encourage hostility to his mother's country, he was during the whole of that period in affectionate correspondence with his royal relatives and pretending to be their friend and ally. There was an indescribable perfidy running through the whole of the latter part of his career. He was constantly starting movements and agitations the effect and consequences of which he did not foresee. All he cared about was to be able to strike an effective theatrical pose for the moment. What happened afterwards was of minor consequence.

To illustrate the depth of meanness and treachery to which the German Government had recourse in their machinations against England, I need merely recite the action which they took in China, when we,

at their request, undertook to co-operate with them for the purpose of obtaining a permanent and satisfactory settlement of the differences between China and the big Powers of the world.

In these operations each nation undertook, with the assent of the others, to occupy temporarily certain parts of China, and, as part of the understanding, we sent a force to Shanghai. In negotiating with China we suddenly experienced a note of resentment on the part of the Chinese officials. There was evidently something wrong, and after investigation we ascertained that the German Consul-General had deliberately informed the Chinese Government that the British intended permanently to occupy Shanghai and had no intention of adhering to their word to vacate it when peace was made. The action of the Consul-General at Shanghai was known to and approved by the German Government. The Government here was very indignant, and Lord Lansdowne, who was Foreign Secretary, wrote to the German Government the stiffest despatch I have ever read, openly accusing their officials of falsehood and circulating untrue statements for the purpose of prejudicing the Chinese against the English good faith. A few days after this despatch was sent, the Kaiser announced his intention of visiting England. He went to Sandringham, and Lansdowne was one of the visitors who was commanded to meet him. I said to Lansdowne, "You will not have a very pleasant visit." "No," he said; "I am not looking forward to it." The Kaiser came; he had some conversations with Lansdowne, but he never once alluded to this transaction. In the circumstances he should have done one of two things. He either should have attempted to vindicate the action of his subordinates,

or he should have apologised or withdrawn the false statements which the subordinate had circulated. The Kaiser did neither one nor the other, though he knew perfectly well that his Government had been detected in conduct which was outside the limit of diplomatic decency.

Sir Spencer Wilkinson last year (1920) alluded to this incident as follows in the *Sunday Times* :

"Count Bernstorff on one occasion asked me to meet Count Metternich at dinner in order to discuss the tension of feeling between the two countries. Count Metternich put to me the question, 'Do you think there is any prospect of an end to the feeling of estrangement towards Germany?' 'It will not begin to end,' I replied, 'until there is in Germany a Government or a statesman whose word the British Government can believe.'

Count Metternich was, of course, indignant at what he was bound to take as an insult, and said, with the dignity of an offended magnate and the irritation of a startled Ambassador, 'What do you mean?' I replied simply, 'What about Shanghai?' Whereupon the Ambassador's wrath subsided, and he said plaintively, 'Ah! that was a great mistake. I was always against it,' thus giving away the truth that the breach of faith, so far from being the work of the German representative in China, had been fully discussed beforehand at Berlin."

It is not necessary for me to follow up or to gauge the continuous course of deceit and treachery which the Kaiser practised against this country in the interval between the time of which I am writing and the outbreak of war in 1914. The veil is gradually being lifted, and the world at large is getting a better insight into the character of the ex-Kaiser. Whether he is at all times responsible for his actions

may be open to doubt ; but, putting that consideration on one side, his career is a unique combination of bluster, insincerity and ineptitude. Other monarchs before him by their action and policy have involved their people in disaster, and other sovereigns have had to face internal revolution to which they have succumbed ; but there is no record in history of any sovereign deliberately entangling his people in a huge war and then running away to another country to save his own skin ; nor is there any parallel to the rapidity and completeness of the revolution which he provoked in his own country. The Government, the Army, the bureaucracy of Germany at the commencement of the war were the best organised and most loyal of any in the world. It was the infirmity of purpose of the Kaiser that irretrievably wrecked these superlative institutions. He was a mountebank from the first, and the stern realities of war have indelibly stamped this hall-mark upon him. In peace manœuvres he loved to gallop on a white horse flourishing a sword at the head of thousands of cavalry ; but he showed no tendency to be at the forefront of battle when high-explosives, bullets and gas had to be encountered. Right up to the very end of the war he strutted about as the "All-Highest" and "Great War Lord" and impressed upon his soldiers and people the necessity of shedding their last drop of blood on behalf of himself and his aims ; but when he had to face danger in Berlin he bolted in the middle of the night to Army Headquarters, and, finding that location not free from risk, he precipitately abdicated and sought safety in a neutral country.

CHAPTER XVI

THE close of the last session left Balfour in a triumphant position. He had been most severely tested, and he emerged from the ordeal with a success which his most enthusiastic admirers could not have anticipated. It was one thing to have worsted the Irish revolutionaries and English Radicals in debate. He had obtained the exceptional powers for which he wished ; he had amended in a liberal and broad spirit the existing Land Acts in Ireland. Would he, with these two weapons in his possession, be able to check and counteract the agitation founded on outrage and murder which dominated so large a portion of Ireland ? Would he be as successful in his acts as he had been in his talk ? He had an able staff at Dublin, and by the end of the year they had in combination so asserted themselves that disorder and lawlessness were gradually diminishing. Although the Home Rulers had recourse to their usual tactics of gross personal abuse and misrepresentation of the motives of their leading opponent, Balfour was absolutely impervious to this class of attack, and he ignored them in a most practical way by not reading the newspapers in which they appeared, unless he was compelled to do so for purposes of debate.

Balfour is one of the few English officials who, when in Ireland, appraised at their proper value the expletives of the Irish politicians, which, after all, are only a reflection of the natural tendency of Irish-

men to indulge in violent language on the smallest provocation. It means little or nothing, and no one in Ireland dreams of taking these verbal expressions at their face value. The prosaic Saxon, especially if he is in the House of Commons, puts the same estimate upon the Irish vocabulary as he would upon his own. He cannot imagine or grasp the astounding power of exaggeration and mis-statement which runs behind the ordinary utterances of Irishmen in politics ; nor can he understand how, when anyone indulges in such language, he can five minutes afterwards be hobnobbing with the very person whom he had so vituperated and insulted. A few years back I had a good illustration of this tendency.

I was asked to preside over a panel of Irish private Bills. It was anticipated that there would be some excitement and strong language used in connection with them, and those in conduct of private business thought that, as I was Irish, I might be able to get these Bills through with less ruction than one who was not accustomed to Irish rhodomontade. I reluctantly accepted the post. The first Bill that came up was one connected with the water-supply of Queenstown. A large spring of the very best water was in the possession of a private company mainly composed of Protestants. The Town Council, who were anxious to acquire this spring, was composed of advanced Nationalists. The inevitable religious difficulty and antagonism were thus introduced into this water question. Upon the Committee was a very well-known Nationalist member, Mr. A. M. Sullivan, an excellent fellow, gifted with rare powers of speech, but very emotional. The Secretary of the Water Company, who was an Orangeman, described to us the ordeal to which he had been subjected by

threatening letters and otherwise, and he addressed all his remarks to A. M. Sullivan as though he had been the author and instigator of these attacks. The case evidently was one for compromise, and after it had proceeded a little while I suggested that they might retire and see if they could not agree. They retired, and after a short time the Counsel on both sides said that they had come to a settlement, and they would put the Secretary of the Water Company into the box to confirm the arrangement which had been made. The Secretary then gave the necessary evidence, and this concluded the case. But he then turned round to me, and said, "Me Lord, may I say a word?" "Yes," I said, "if you won't take long about it." "I wish to say this to this honourable Committee. My life had been in great danger over this matter. Many is the threatening letter that I have received, but I don't mind that; but the mean assassin who sent them [pointing to A. M. Sullivan] forgot to stamp them, and I had to pay twopence for each." As may be imagined, a noisy row ensued, which ended in an ample apology being made to the "mean assassin." But when the Committee was up, I found in the lobby and engaged in a most friendly and hearty conversation the "mean assassin" and the receiver of threatening letters.

George Trevelyan, who had had an unfortunate experience as Irish Secretary, had been one of the most prominent and violent of the Liberal Unionists. He was especially strong in his denunciation of Spencer for following Gladstone in his *volte face* upon Home Rule. Trevelyan had very brilliant literary gifts, but for political work he was not equally qualified, and there were soon indications that he was prepared to wobble on the Home Rule question.

The Eighty Club, which had been established to commemorate Gladstone's great electioneering victory in that year, was the centre of animated discussion. Lord Edmund Fitzmaurice and Trevelyan, a former Irish Secretary, both being at that time Unionists, agreed to raise a discussion at one of the meetings of this Club. To Trevelyan was allotted one part of the speech, to Fitzmaurice another, and each had reported to the other the line and tone of argument which he proposed to adopt. In the middle of Trevelyan's speech Fitzmaurice was surprised to hear a sentence to the effect that the game of law and order in Ireland was up. Walking home with Trevelyan after dinner, he said to him, "Why did you not let me know that you were going to make that statement?" Trevelyan replied that he did not think it was material. Very shortly afterwards Trevelyan ratted on his previous opinion and became a full-blown and unbenign supporter of Home Rule. This change of opinion was naturally a source of great delight to the Nationalist members, who, on the Address and according to their practice, proceeded to eulogise Trevelyan in extravagant terms both as a man and a politician.

In this debate upon the Address allusion was made to and a half-apology tendered to Balfour for the outrageous abuse which had been heaped upon him by the Nationalist Press. Balfour, in reply, said that he did not consider, according to Irish standards, that the language applied to him had been violent. It is true that he had been described as one "who hunted for slaughter with a eunuchised imagination," but that, after all, was a compliment compared to the description they had given of their present idol, Sir George Trevelyan, in which it was stated that

“if Nature had denied to Trevelyan the resources of the skunk and the cuttle-fish, she had enabled him to supply their place.” Balfour’s utter indifference to the personalities which had driven Trevelyan almost into hysterics deprived the Nationalists of their most effective Parliamentary weapon.

The Address was carried by a large majority—317 to 229—and 50 Liberal Unionists voted with the majority. Balfour’s double success, his dominance in the House of Commons and the steady reassertion of law and authority in Ireland, seemed to madden Gladstone. It was noted at that time that as the fight became hotter it was Parnell who became cooler and more moderate, and it was the elderly statesman who had been three times Prime Minister who became more violent and extravagant in temper and language.

During this session the Government introduced a Land Bill. Gladstone opposed it, Parnell approved of it in principle, but with reservations. The plan of campaign which had recently been started was condemned by the Pope. Parnell was entertained at the Eighty Club, and he there admitted that, in his judgment, the plan of campaign was an error, but was unavoidable; but Gladstone never said a word of condemnation. On the contrary, his speeches seemed to indicate that he was ready to take any temporary advantage which the starting and spread of this conspiracy could give to him politically.

During this year certain Irish magistrates inflicted cumulative sentences upon prisoners who were brought before them. Gladstone denounced these as a “trick of the meanest kind, the dishonour and discredit of which I will not attempt to divide

between Government and the authorities in Ireland." He assumed that the power of enforcing cumulative sentences was conferred by the Coercion Act of the preceding year, which he had opposed, but it was contained in earlier Acts, and cumulative sentences had constantly been imposed during the time he was in power. Balfour very promptly brought out this fact, but we had no apology or retraction from Gladstone.

There was a very able but somewhat scatterbrained professor, Stuart by name, in the House of Commons who was a very sincere admirer of Gladstone, but he was, though a man of considerable attainments, also a *gobe-mouche*. He supplied Gladstone with some amazing stories in connection with transactions upon Lord Leitrim's estate of which Gladstone promptly made use, but which subsequently proved to be grossly inaccurate. The knowledge that he had supplied this information was well known, and after one of Gladstone's violent speeches in the House of Commons, Colonel Saunderson, who was the wittiest and, I think, the ablest speaker amongst the Irish Unionists, jumped up and opened his speech by pointing to Stuart and saying, "Has the Professor again been on the warpath?"

During this period Gladstone was so obsessed by his Irish policy that there was nothing too good for those Irishmen with whom he was co-operating and nothing too bad for those who were opposed to him. The Act of Union was described as an "Act of almost unparalleled blackguardism and corruption." Gladstone did not take the trouble to ascertain, which he might have done, that one-third of the sums paid to the Irish Parliament for the abolition of the Irish representation went into the pockets of those who

were opposed to the Union. The money was paid, not as a bribe, but as compensation, which I quite admit is an altogether wrong principle, but one which certainly did not justify the language which Gladstone used in connection with it.

Gladstone dined out one night at a small dinner-party, and Lowell, the well-known American minister and wit, was one of the company. Speaking about Ireland, Gladstone asserted that those high, narrow, small towers, one of which can be found near Naas and the origin and use of which have much puzzled archæologists, are some of the oldest and most astounding historical monuments known. This was too much for Lowell, who mildly suggested that there were such things as the Pyramids. His remark annoyed Gladstone, and he turned upon Lowell and said, "When did you come back from America?" "I left New York about ten days ago," replied Lowell. "Can you tell me," said Gladstone, "why New York is the worst-governed city in America?" "Yes, I can; but you would not like the answer." "What is it?" "That the Irish have got control of it through Tammany Hall." Gladstone was so angry that he declined to have any further conversation with Lowell during the dinner.

I mention these facts, not to disparage the memory of a very remarkable man, but to give some idea of the exceptional difficulties which those who were opposed to his Irish policy had to encounter from his language and demeanour, and how that the older he became the more determined he seemed to be in his ubiquitous oratory to dissociate himself from those habits of restraint and moderation of language which usually are associated with advancing years

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and with a public man of his exceptional standing and reputation.

At the end of the session, Gladstone, in combination with Parnell, made continuous attacks upon the Irish Estimates. Balfour defended himself with extraordinary ability, and at the close he had established his reputation not only as a debater but as an administrator ; also, I think it is no exaggeration to say that he became in the minds of the great mass of the English people the most prominent figure in Parliament.

Though Irish matters occupied the greater part of this session, we passed a big Local Government Bill, which Ritchie handled with great skill, and Goschen also brought in a Bill for the conversion of Consols into a lower rate of interest. But whilst the Government's position inside the House of Commons became stronger and stronger, outside we lost seats continuously ; in fact, our position ultimately became somewhat precarious, although we had good luck to retain by small majorities the seats of Doncaster and Deptford. Mr. (now Mr. Justice) Darling was our candidate for the latter place, and I have no doubt it was his wit, imagination and power of speech which in that somewhat prosaic place secured for us that victory.

Beach also returned to the House of Commons, his sight greatly improved, and very shortly afterwards he became President of the Board of Trade. He could only read with difficulty, but his concentrated memory enabled him to carry on the work of his office efficiently. His sight steadily improved, and in the course of the next two or three years became almost normal. I hardly know of any case where a man of first-class ability was so prostrated

by partial blindness and ill-health, and yet by the aid of fresh treatment and a good constitution was so rehabilitated as to be able for many years afterwards to take a leading part in the public life of the country.

These two small victories at Doncaster and Deptford had a steadying effect upon the electorate and rallied the spirits and fighting power of our party. At the time I calculated that, though the majorities in each case were under 300, these elections each added an effective year to the life of our Government.

In times of stress and emergency, incidents little in themselves do subsequently influence big issues to a surprising degree, and this phenomenon is applicable to war as well as to peace time. Cause and effect can never be correlated. Over and over again in some of the Titanic battles of the Great War of 1914-18 the turning-point leading to victory was a comparatively small success little in its dimensions but so woven locally, psychologically or chronologically into some much bigger movement as just to give it the necessary volition at the critical moment of balance between defeat and victory. Politics and war are governed and regulated by much the same principles and qualities. What brings success in the one is almost sure to stave off defeat in the other.

CHAPTER XVII

EARLY in the year 1888 the Emperor William died. The removal of this great monarchical pillar from the scene of his successive triumphs and the gap thus caused in the whole Royal system of Europe would, under any conditions, have created a stir ; but his death occurred at a critical moment in the conflict between autocracy and constitutionalism in Germany. His eldest son and successor was known to hold strong views as to the necessity of modifying, by the infusion of popular ideas and principles, the existing iron system of bureaucracy in Germany. In the past he and his illustrious consort had thrown themselves almost across Bismarck's path in their endeavours to promote such changes ; but that omnipotent Minister had summarily swept on one side all such ideas and efforts, and he treated with his remorseless vindictiveness the lesser confederates in these movements. Now that supreme legal authority was about to descend upon his old antagonists and they were to become his Imperial and Royal Masters, would he accept a position of less omnipotence, or would he rally against a constitutional monarch those national elements and forces which he had by his success and character made his own ? The first question started was—could the Crown Prince succeed if he was suffering from a mortal and incurable disease ? The Prussian Constitution was supposed to veto such a succession. That the

Crown Prince was seriously ill was undeniable, but was his disease fatal? Over this point there was a very unseemly medical squabble—whether the Crown Prince's illness was such as to make it certain that his death would be in the immediate future, or whether a dispute of this kind carried with it too much discredit and obloquy. At any rate, it was not pressed, and the Crown Prince succeeded his father as Emperor early in the year. He died a few months later, and with his death all hope of the immediate subordination of militarism and bureaucracy to popular influence and control vanished.

There was an excellent *Life of the Empress Frederick* written some time back. It was very sad reading. Seldom has any woman been so gifted both intellectually and morally; her courage and endurance were superlatively high, but all her political instincts and education were associated with the institutions and habits of her native country rather than with those she found in force in Germany, and she had the misfortune, in the prosecution of her ideas, to come across the biggest man of the century, who was ruthless in his methods and dislikes. With all his brutality he could appreciate and utilise the good qualities of an antagonist, but he never made any overtures to nor did he ever forgive the Crown Prince and his consort for their opposition to him when, in his earlier career as Minister, he was fighting for existence.

The Crown Princess, with her indomitable courage, receptivity, powers of work and high intellectual attainments, was almost as remarkable a personality as Bismarck. What an ally and help she could have been to him in the attainment of his higher ideals of national life and character if they could ever in

any way have worked together! What a moderating and liberal force she would have become in German politics, and how different now would be the history and outlook both of Germany and Europe! That these two great people might have combined their forces in certain spheres of action may seem now a fantastic phantasy; but the idea floated through my mind one year whilst I was in attendance upon Queen Victoria at Balmoral. The Empress was on a visit to her mother, and for at least a week I sat next her at dinner. She was a wonderful conversationalist, full of ideas—past, present and future—thoroughly well up in modern literature, science, art and politics, and gifted with rare powers of expression and a charming voice; but if ever we entered upon any controversial subject, there was a vibrant assertiveness in her lovely voice which made one realise that she was a tenacious fighter and not easily moved from her path when once it was selected.

During this week I was reading Busch's *Life of Bismarck*, which had just come out, and the simultaneous contact—one, it is true, only on paper, and the other in person—with these two great personalities made their antagonism and lifelong duel a melancholy reflection. The Empress, from the day she landed in Germany, seems to have been located in a disloyal and depreciative atmosphere. Nothing she did was right or commendable, and though at times she may have been too uncompromising in her attitude, now that we know more of German mentality we can understand and realise the odious environment with which she was encircled and the delight with which it would snub and thwart the ideas of an English Princess. Yet there was one idea in common between the two—the need of civil control over

militarism. In her it was uppermost and outspoken; in him it was latent and the product of his later experience. His original policy was "blood and iron," for it was by these means alone that he could smash the protocolic supremacy of Austria and the military dominance of France; but, these two great objects being accomplished, he became more and more conscious of the danger of letting loose the aspirations of the German military caste. A close perusal of his Life shows how constant was his fight and attempted control of militarism. In the peace he made with Austria he beat the military party; in the peace with France they beat him, and, contrary to his judgment, the annexation of Lorraine was insisted upon. In 1875, and not infrequently in later years, he stopped war; and when he was suddenly ousted from office by William Hohenzollern, he foresaw that this braggart young man would be quite unequal to the task of keeping the military power under control. Internal consolidation rather than external and colonial expansion was his goal. Permanent peace at home and not constant war abroad was the foundation of his later policy. What a cordial and capable ally he would have found in the Empress in the enforcement of such principles! Both are now gone, and the world is strewn with the wreckage of civilisation. German militarism is gone, and though it may revive, never again will it assume its old omnipotence, for it will be connected with if not controlled by political and popular authority.

Of the two it may fairly be said it is the Empress's ideas rather than those of Bismarck which will dominate the future, for it is by their admission and adoption alone that the permanent peace of the world can be secured. How different would

the world be and what a superhuman load of misery, destruction and desolation should we have been spared if this truth could have been recognised only a few years back!

Bismarck's retirement into private life was associated with an incident more grotesque than tragic. An intimate and distinguished associate of both the Kaiser and Bismarck gave me their versions of the final scene. "In the room where we met there was a table between us," said the Kaiser, "and on it was a solid and heavy inkstand. So beside himself with fury was the Prince that I had to keep my eye on that inkstand for fear it should be thrown at the head of his Sovereign." Bismarck's account was that the Kaiser "worked himself up into such a state of uncontrollable rage that I had carefully to watch the inkstand on the table between us. If the interview had lasted much longer I should have been bespattered with its contents."

CHAPTER XVIII

AFTER Balfour had established his supremacy over the Irish members in debate, the record of the proceedings of the House of Commons for the next four years is somewhat monotonous. It was one continuous conflict between the Government, as represented by Balfour (and occasionally assisted by Goschen and the Home Secretary, Mr. Matthews), against the combined forces of the Opposition, headed by Gladstone and Parnell. Balfour throughout held his own with ease. There were scenes of considerable disorder and at times almost of violence. They afforded "copy" for the journalists at the time they occurred, but they are not of much interest to the historical student of to-day. But it was not in the House of Commons alone that Gladstone was active. He showed a most astounding vitality and vigour in his performances on the platform. Someone in conversation with Granville expressed intense admiration for Gladstone's mental gifts. Granville replied, "It is his body rather than his mind that I envy." Gladstone was then in his seventy-ninth year, but during the Whitsuntide holidays of 1889 he made one if not two speeches a day for a whole fortnight, and each successive speech outdid its predecessor in exaggeration and violence. Balfour waited for him until he had finished his tour, and he then replied at Portsmouth. His reply is such a masterpiece of effective satire that I quote verbatim a long passage from it.

"I should like," he said, "to give lectures teaching any aspirant to fame how to become a Separatist agitator. I have made a careful study of the whole subject, and I have seen a good deal of it. A good many of the arts have been practised upon myself, and I think that I know as much about the subject as anybody. I should say, in the first place, to such a person, "Never argue, because an argument can be answered. Never develop your plan for Home Rule, because painful experience has shown that no plan of Home Rule has ever yet been devised by the most ingenious brain which could not be knocked to pieces in twenty minutes by the least expert of political pugilists. Starve your memory—it is a most inconvenient gift; and cultivate your imagination, for it is the most valuable of all qualities. When you are speaking in England and to an English audience, melt them into tears by a picture of the woes and poverty of the Irish tenant. When you are in Ireland, do all you can to destroy the confidence which is the only basis of industrial development. . . .

When you are in England, talk about the union of hearts; but when you are in Ireland, praise the memory of the rebels of 1798, or the rebels of 1848, or the rebels of 1868, or of the Manchester murderers. When you are in England, discourse on the brutality of landlords who turn out their tenants and on the hardness of agents who will not give an abatement of rent. When you are in Ireland, take care that no offer, however reasonable, shall be accepted by any tenant. Turn them out of their holdings, compel them to adopt the plan of campaign, deprive them by your procedure of the whole of the improvements they have made on their farms, and then support them in pauperism and poverty out of the funds of the Land League. Invent for yourself, if you have sufficient ingenuity, or if that be too much trouble take from the pages of *United Ireland*

any number of falsehoods and fictions with regard to the action of the Government and police in that country. Lavish imaginary tales about little girls and old women who are put in prison, about old men who are knocked down for intimidating the police, about persons who are put in prison for cheering Mr. Gladstone or booing Mr. Balfour. When one lie has been exposed, go to another; when one story has been utterly exposed, there is nothing to prevent your exercising the same great gift in the creation of a new one. When it has been conclusively proved that Mr. Mandeville was not murdered by the Chief Secretary, then make out that Mr. O'Brien is being murdered by the Chief Secretary. When it has been shown that Mr. O'Brien on his own testimony and the sworn testimony of everybody concerned has not been treated with more force than was absolutely necessary to carry out the rules of the prison, make no apology, do not allude to the question, but invent some new fiction which will be equally attractive. Then when you have done all this, and when you have learned the art of seasoning the whole dish with a kind of sickly sentimentality as far removed from true humanity as the north is from the south, then you will be qualified to join the great band of Separatist orators, and to shatter the Constitution in the name of freedom, and to destroy the law in the name of liberty."

In the middle of this year Bright died. He had long been ill, and the only political sign of existence which he gave during his illness was the publication of occasional letters, generally upon Home Rule. They were characterised right up to the end of his life by the terse and caustic language of which he was so pre-eminently a master. In the days of his power and plenitude of speech he was not an agree-

able opponent: he could be intensely unfair; but in his defence it must be alleged that he never pretended to put any part of the case of the institution or of the individual he was attacking. His business, he said, was to make a permanent and effective attack; let the friends of the institution or individual attacked defend themselves as best they could and say what they liked. He was in consequence not infrequently involved in acrimonious personal controversy; but it was not in his nature either to retract or to apologise for what he had once said. The only person who did obtain from him something approaching an apology was the celebrated orator Archbishop Magee, in a controversy over the Burials Bill. The correspondence is contained in Magee's Life, written by his son, and it is worth reading. Both were hard hitters, both masters of their native tongue, but each evidently had for the other a latent admiration which softened and elevated the whole tone of their communications. No man ever more justly deserved the epithet of "honest" than John Bright, and to his honesty may be added a love of conflict and undying loyalty to his class and environment. If he had been born a squire, he would have been an agrarian Cromwell—hard, just, but an autocrat to the backbone. It was his surroundings and early training and sect which alone made him a Pacifist and cosmopolitan trader; but even then he denounced all who opposed his views in a true spirit of militarist ferocity. Unlike his eloquent contemporary, he was not gifted with a superfluity of speech. Though an active agitator in his early life, for the last twenty years of his career he spoke rarely. He was, I think, by nature

indolent, and a mere love of work and talk had for him little attraction; but he never lost his influence or the penetrating effect of his massive and concentrated eloquence.

It cannot be denied that Gladstone's tactics, however detrimental they might be to his reputation as a thinker and statesman, did not pay in their immediate results. The Government did lose by elections, and to that extent the Opposition benefited and the Government were embarrassed; but success so attained carried with it penalties, and the worst of them did not make their effect felt in the near future, but they showed themselves in the ultimate and steady declension of the standard of Parliamentary efficiency.

The House of Commons, according to our Constitution, is not a mere debating or even a mere legislative machine. Talk is not its first or final function. It has to administer, govern, foresee, and above all, it must have time to think. The Empire it dominates is unique in its vastness and variety. On no Parliament is there so large and varied a sphere of responsible duty and action imposed as that which comes within the purview of the House of Commons. To Gladstone it was a relaxation rather than a task to speak upon the platform. He was so constituted that he could without difficulty have made a speech every day in the year which, from his extraordinary combination of oratorical gifts, would have attracted large and enthusiastic audiences. His range of general knowledge was such that the speeches so made would have passed muster with the general public, though possibly not with the experts of the subjects upon which he spoke. His political status was so pre-

eminent, his intellectual gifts so universally acknowledged, that what he did became a fashion and duty to a large section of the political world. In the last stages of his political career he raised, not so much the standard of public speaking, as the expectation and requirements of the constituencies as to the quantity of talk their representative should give them, and this obligation still holds good, and it is one which has imposed itself more or less upon all aspirants for public distinction. To be perpetually talking is an ordeal to which few Englishmen, however talented, care to subject themselves. The physical strain, the absorption of time necessitated by the travelling to and fro, are beyond the average human endurance unless a man is preparing to convert himself into a mere dictaphone. Men of capacity, who like to weigh in advance the balance of their words and who are reluctant to commit themselves suddenly to any unthought-out solution of a difficult problem, were hopelessly handicapped in the new test imposed upon them. Democracy no doubt has the merit of laying the foundations of authority upon a broader and less hazardous basis than a constitution of more limited dimensions ; but all democracies have difficulty in obtaining through popular election effective and capable governors. The ordeal which Gladstone inaugurated of constant and perpetual talk has scared away from political life capable and conscientious men who will not subordinate their whole being to stump oratory. The unquestioned declension in recent years of the House of Commons is largely due to the practical exclusion from public life of that class of man whose powers of action and administration are in excess of their facility of talk and who, whilst

ready to make politics their primary job, are not prepared to spend their whole lives upon the platform. This evil became very apparent during the recent war. As soon as it became necessary for the State to take over and administer certain functions in relation to trade, commerce and transport which before the war were outside the sphere of public control, there were not to be found in Parliament the men capable of discharging these duties. They had to be taken from business and commercial circles, where work and performance rather than words are made the test of capacity ; and this deterioration of Parliament will unquestionably continue until a more reasonable conception of what constitutes capacity for public service is substituted for the present test. Democracy and talk are the natural concomitants the one of the other, and their progeny not infrequently is inept administration.

CHAPTER XIX

THE Parliament of '86 was elected on an Irish issue, and throughout its life Irish questions were irrepressible, dominant and kaleidoscopic. The fortunes of the Gladstonian Radicals hung upon the Irish Party. The personality of Parnell so grew and developed that he gradually became the Irish Party. Upon the popular estimate and valuation of this extraordinary man depended henceforth the success and failure of the Gladstone movement. If Parnell by his conduct and acts alienated sympathy and public response, down went the value of the Gladstonian Party stock. If, on the other hand, he could free himself from injurious allegations and charges made against him, up went the prospect of the return to power of the out-of-office Radicals. As the conflict between Unionism and Separatism progressed, it became clear to impartial onlookers that it was Parnell and not Gladstone who was the controlling and driving force of the latter. What he did, and not what Gladstone said, governed the situation, and this gravitation of power from the head of the larger party to the leader of the smaller became more and more marked. It has been one of the misfortunes of British internal politics that, from the date of the acceptance of Home Rule by the Radical Party, it ceased to be its own master, and (with the exception of the Parliament from 1906 to 1910, in which the Unionists had been shattered to pieces by its so-called Tariff Reform)

it has been dependent upon the Irish vote for a majority. Anything seriously affecting Parnell's character had attached to it not only the momentum and excitement of a personal attack upon a most influential politician, but carried in its wake for good or for evil the fortunes of the advanced Radical Party. In the consequences of the verdict it provoked the issue was not only personal and political, but Imperial and world-wide.

Though the story has often before been told, it may not be out of place if, from the inward knowledge which my position gave me, I were briefly to review the situation as it existed at the commencement of the session of 1888.

In the communications made public partly by the voice of the Government in 1883 and partly by Mrs. O'Shea's subsequent reminiscences, it seems clear that Parnell had to make up his mind before he could get out of Kilmainham Gaol whether he should throw in his lot for the future with the moderates or the extremists of his party. He finally determined to take the moderate side and break with the extremists. Mrs. O'Shea put her whole influence into the scale to secure that end, but he incurred considerable personal risk by throwing over the extremists, and this no doubt accounted for his practice of leaving no address or indication where he was or was likely to be. One of his offers to the then Government was a proposal to communicate with an outrage-monger in the west and through him to try to stop outrage. Forster, the ex-Secretary for Ireland, pounced upon this in debate and stated that, after such an admission, he must decline any public co-operation with Parnell. The probability, therefore, is that

Parnell had had communications with the promoters of outrage; but it is improbable, knowing his character, that the letters either allowed or directly condoned outrage. Still, they might not be pleasant reading to the Radical Party, who, on account of Parnell's resuscitation as a respectable politician, relied upon his good name to carry them to victory. There were in Dublin a number of rascals, the scum of the revolutionary movement, ready to do anything for money for either side, and the most notorious of them as a blackmailer and concocter of false news was a man named Pigott. The infamy of his character had already obtained for him a very unsavoury reputation.

In England the principal owner of the *Times* was Mr. Walter, an upright, well-meaning pedant, with an adequate sense of his importance as the *Times* proprietor. He was ambitious in the sense of wishing to be handed down to posterity as a man who so utilised his advantages as to have become a saviour of his country. Unfortunately, he had neither the acumen nor perception necessary for the exceptional rôle he had undertaken.

There was therefore a combination of personalities and incidents all converging to a dramatic climax; the leader of a great political movement who was supposed to have dabbled in the manufacture of outrages and to have written letters on such subjects, a lot of scoundrels ready to bring evidence that there were such letters, and a rich and obstinate newspaper proprietor determined, on patriotic grounds, to spend any amount of money and time in getting hold of such letters. There was another coincidence which later on subjected the Government to much obloquy.

According to the custom of the times the Law Officers were free to take private work, and Sir Richard Webster, the Attorney-General of the Government, had been and was Standing Counsel to the *Times*.

Walter opened proceedings in 1887 by publishing a series of articles entitled " Parnellism and Crime," and a foolish and futile attempt made by two Unionist Members of Parliament to bring the editor of the *Times* to the bar of the House greatly embarrassed the Government in the further handling of this most difficult matter. Though Parnell at that time asked for a Select Committee to investigate the authenticity or falsity of the letters alleged to have been written by him, he did not press his demand with his usual aggressive pertinacity. It was alleged by some, who pretended to know the working of the inner ring of the Land League, that there were in existence letters written by Parnell the publication of which, even if they did not directly incite crime, would have been very damaging to his reputation and proved that he was cognisant of what was going on. To use a favourite expression coined at that time—it would show that he was able to regulate the " throttle-valve " of outrage. This may account for a certain hesitancy in his attitude during the earlier phases of the publication of these articles. It should also be remembered that, although those so-called facsimile letters entirely absorbed public attention, they were only part of the evidence offered of a wide-drawn and wholesale indictment of the Land League as traffickers in outrage and murder.

In the middle of 1888 Frank Hugh O'Donnell, a well-known Nationalist M.P., brought an action

against the *Times* for defamation and libel on the plea that he was a member of the party against which false accusations had been brought. Although a Nationalist, he was not on good terms with Parnell, and it was believed at the time that his object was not so much to clear himself as to embarrass Parnell. In the trial which ensued, Webster appeared as Counsel to the *Times*, and in discharge of that duty he read out a number of letters, not only those already published, but others in addition which he alleged had been written by Parnell and were in his handwriting. The inconvenience and impropriety of Law Officers engaging in private practice could not be more strongly illustrated than by the course of this trial. No member of the Government was consulted or had the least idea that their Attorney-General had intended to take this line of defence in a civil action. It was a political move of the utmost importance. If it had been proposed to use these letters officially in the House of Commons in debate, their origin, authenticity and method of acquirement would have been critically and microscopically examined before any Minister would have ventured to allude to them; but because they were in a brief given to a lawyer engaged in a civil action, that lawyer, though he was Attorney-General, treated them merely as matter relative to the duty he had been privately fee-ed to discharge. He accepted their authenticity upon the authority of his brief.

Webster was a most upright public servant, hard-working, courageous and straightforward, but, simply by adherence to the ordinary legal procedure in a civil case in which he was privately but professionally engaged, he personally as Attorney-General involved

the Government in a series of embarrassing and humiliating difficulties. Moreover, the line of defence which he took was artless and stupid, for by needlessly reading out all the letters purporting to be Parnell's which were in the possession of the *Times*, he let Parnell know exactly what they had and what they had not got. From that moment Parnell's attitude changed. He knew he could prove that all the letters read were either copies or forgeries; in either case it was competent to him to deny them. He at once demanded vigorously and continuously an examination of the documents which he alleged had been forged by the *Times* to ruin him.

It is more than a generation since the incidents to which I allude occurred, and therefore there is no harm in referring to the incredible simplicity of Walter in the management of his case. The letters which he published had been obtained from a gang of criminals. It never occurred to him to employ either as solicitor or counsel men accustomed to deal with criminal cases. The fact that his family solicitor was also solicitor to the *Times* newspaper was quite sufficient to give him all the necessary qualifications. The intimacy of Walter with members of the Government, the strong and consistent support of the *Times* of the Unionist Party, and the unfortunate combination of the duties by which a lawyer was at the same time Attorney-General to the Government and Counsel for the *Times* gave substance to the allegation of our opponents that the Government and *Times* were working together to befoul the character of their leading political opponent. This feeling was not confined only to the credulous and suspicious, it was

widely held by persons of intelligence and standing. It became imperative, not only in the interests of the Government, but also of fair play and honourable treatment of an opponent, that a full, impartial inquiry should at once be instituted ; but there was no available tribunal for such a trial. A Committee of the House of Commons composed of two sets of partisans, each prejudiced and pledged in advance, would be a hopeless tribunal and one whose proceedings were sure to bring disrepute not only upon itself but upon the assembly who sanctioned it. Parnell obstinately declined to go to the law courts, as he maintained that, in the political atmosphere, he would not obtain a fair trial. A special court had therefore to be created, and the Government determined by Act of Parliament to set up a tribunal of three judges, to be named in the Act, with full powers to inquire not merely into the authenticity of the letters, but into the general allegations of the wholesale conspiracy to promote crime and outrage throughout Ireland.

From the moment the Bill containing these proposals was introduced up to the last moment of the discussion upon it, the House of Commons became the scene of the most unfair, acrimonious and scandalous imputations. The issues were momentous upon which the Commission had to adjudicate. Every effort was made, from Gladstone downward, both as regards the personnel of the Commission and the scope of its inquiries, to "square the pitch"—if I may use so slangy an expression. A great deal of manœuvring was, in the circumstances, to be expected, and up to a certain point was legitimate. On one part of the inquiry—namely, the authenticity of the letters—the Na-

tionalists, now that the *Times* had shown its hand, were confident of a favourable verdict. On the wider and general charges of sanction to and complicity of outrage and crime their consciences were uneasy. The Unionists were not confident, once they had perused the ill-expressed, uneducated letters which Webster had read out, of a verdict upon this point, though on the large issue they were certain of a general condemnation of Land League practices. As might be expected, each side tried to give more prominence to that part of the inquiry upon which they thought they would win and to push into the background that part upon which they might lose.

Smith, who could not be unfair if he tried, as Leader of the House did his best to hold the balance, but, unfortunately, whilst in charge of the Bill he became a suspect.

Walter was a great personal friend of Smith. The Government were about to give the go-by to the recognised courts of law by setting up under a new statute a special court to try the *Times*. This must subject that newspaper to immense trouble and expense. What could be more reasonable than that Smith should see Walter and explain to him why he must submit to this penalty? And doubtless in any such conversation Smith would have made it clear to Walter that it was entirely in consequence of his obstinacy in publishing letters before he had established their authenticity that the Government was compelled to take this exceptional action. Be this as it may, at any rate an interview was arranged; but unfortunately a well-known lady in Society saw Walter coming out of Smith's house, and, without thinking of the con-

sequence, imparted this piece of gossip to a leading Radical. At once the whole advertising and headline power of the Radical press was set in motion, and a furious press and Parliamentary attack was made upon Smith, who was denounced as conspiring and plotting with the editor of the *Times* to bolster up documents which both knew to be forgeries. The attack was overdone, though it badly wounded Smith ; but our men were so incensed at the language used of—or rather, I should say, hurled at—Smith that they rallied to him. The Bill throughout was carried by large majorities and rapidly passed by the Lords. Messrs. Justices Hannen, Smith and Day, a trio of three exceptionally able judges, were appointed as the Court, and proceedings were fixed to begin on October 17th, 1888.

In the autumn Goschen and I spent part of our holidays in the Engadine. We constantly met and made mountain excursions together. We often discussed the pending inquiry and its probabilities and possibilities. On one point we were both equally confident. Looking at the *Times* staff—managerial, editorial and legal—composed as it was of men of experience, ability and high standing, it was unthinkable that the published letters had come through Pigott's hands to the *Times*. The man's character and antecedents were so well known that any supposition of this kind might be summarily dismissed as outside the pale of possibility.

CHAPTER XX

WHEN the Parnell Commission opened its inquiry, a whisper began to circulate itself until it attained the dimensions of a general rumour to the effect that the so-called facsimile letters had been obtained through Pigott's agency. To all of us who were Irish or in any way acquainted with Dublin gossip and reports, the idea was so incredible that we refused to accept it; but it was converted into an unpleasant fact by Pigott being called as the leading witness for the *Times* as to the authenticity of the letters. The disgust and dismay of the Irish Unionists were indescribable. We all knew what it meant. It was a foregone conclusion that Walter and his agents had been befooled and outwitted. The story need not now be repeated. The wretched man absolutely broke down under cross-examination, the so-called facsimile letters had no authority behind them but the opinion of some expert or other upon handwriting—evidence known by experience to be most unreliable. Pigott thereupon bolted, and shot himself abroad in order to avoid arrest and punishment.

As might be expected, the Home Rule Press and Party became delirious with delight. Parnell could appear nowhere except with a public ovation, and for a short time the Government was shaken to its very foundations. Parliament was not sitting, and public opinion soon began to assess at its true value the significance of what had occurred. The leading journal of the day—strongly Unionist—had received an almost knock-out blow; but the Government,

except through the unfortunate connection of the Attorney-General with the *Times*, was in no way responsible for what had occurred. They had done their best to set up a tribunal beyond suspicion to sift grave allegations made against a political opponent, and the fact that at the very outset of the inquiries the tribunal so specially created had proved the falsity of serious charges was testimony in favour of the course which the Government had advocated and taken. But that outside Parliament Pigott's exposure greatly damaged the Government in popular estimation is undeniable, and nothing but the staunchness of our men and their intuitive instinct that on the other counts of the indictment against Parnell and his party the verdict would be against them saved us from a Parliamentary collapse.

The Commission sat throughout 1889, and towards the end of that year it reported. Our opponents were so overjoyed at the proof of the forgery of the letters alleged to have been written by Parnell that they either ignored or did not follow the subsequent proceedings of the Commission; but from the day that the letters were disposed of, the *Times* counsel slowly but surely built up, by consecutive corroborative and general evidence, the most convincing proof of the criminality of the Land League. The process was slow, but, when finished, the general conclusions were overwhelming. During all this time the Radical and Home Rule Press were open-mouthed in their eulogy of the Commission for their exposure of the forged letters. They pretended that this was the only serious charge to be tried, and they committed themselves in advance to a support and eulogy of the tribunal which had not reported on the great bulk of the allegations to be investigated.

The full Report was issued in the year 1889-90, and whilst it acquitted Parnell as regards the letters, it found him and his confederates guilty of conspiracy by a system of coercion and intimidation to promote agrarian agitation against the payment of rent and tending to incite to sedition and the commission of crime. This judgment endorsed and sustained the indictment which for years past the Unionists, through the Press, in Parliament and on the platform, had made against the Nationalist Party. It was the most complete and unanswerable vindication of the opposition offered to the so-called Home Rule Party and to the policy by which all Ireland would have been put under the harrow of this criminal conspiracy.

Many were the surmises and great were the expectations as to what the Government would do with this Report. The Radical Party and Press were so committed by their previous praise of the Commission that it was difficult if not impossible for them to disparage the general conclusions at which that Commission had arrived ; but to frame any Parliamentary resolutions on the Report of the Commission and to carry them through Parliament would have been a task which would have taken months, would have led to great recrimination, and even when completed would not have advanced the Unionist cause. Beach, whose common sense at times almost developed to genius, suggested a very satisfactory and unanswerable solution of the difficulty. Why should we not move in the House of Commons that the Report be adopted ? The Government acted on this suggestion, and Smith gave notice of the intention of the Government to make such a motion. The Opposition was thoroughly taken aback ; they did not know what

to do; they could not directly oppose the motion, neither could they contest any part of the Report.

Parliament, and especially the House of Commons, has unexplainable and unaccountable moods. The debates on the appointment of the Commission were more virulent and personal than any that I can recollect in my Parliamentary career; the House was the scene of continuous tumult. The debate on the findings of the Report was one of the duller that I ever recollect. Gladstone spoke with his usual eloquence, and he insisted upon a number of days being given to the debate; but the audience was extraordinarily scant and uninterested, and on one occasion we had a count-out. The two main features of the debate were, first, an unusually vigorous speech by Balfour, in which he trounced the Irishmen vigorously for their condonation of crime. They took his lecture and admonitions like lambs, and it was impossible not to feel that the more moderate of them recognised the truth and justice of the allegations of that part of the Report.

Churchill, on the other hand, made a very violent attack on the Government. He got a friendly Member of Parliament, Mr. Jennings, to move a rider to the Government motion. Jennings was a very capable man, whose qualifications and industry would well have made him eligible for office. He was an able writer, and he greatly distinguished himself as the editor of a New York paper which exposed illegal practices in New York. During the greater part of the time that he was so acting, his life was in considerable danger, but he never flinched. Churchill's speech was very coarse in its vocabulary and framed in very bad taste. In fact, it was so violent that Jennings subsequently got up and repudiated

it, stating that he had never intended that his motion should be so utilised, and expressing his entire disapproval of Churchill's attitude. With this speech, Churchill's last Unionist supporter vanished. Ultimately the Report was adopted by 339 to 268, and so ended this memorable political trial and verdict.

On looking back at what occurred, it is clear that the difficulties in which the Government were placed were entirely due to individuals interfering in matters which were outside their legitimate scope or capacity. The editor of a great newspaper should not attempt to institute through his columns a criminal prosecution of a political opponent, or, at any rate, if he is so minded, he should only act on evidence and facts which were absolutely indisputable. The two Members of Parliament who tried in 1887 to bring the editor of the *Times* to the bar of the House of Commons, again, outran their functions and mainly contributed to the subsequent confusion. But this great inquiry and the embarrassment it caused the Government through their leading officer being engaged privately as a counsel put an end to the practice of Law Officers of the Crown embarking during their tenure of office in private business. The antagonism between private duty to a client and public obligation to a Government might be irreconcilable, and in the present instance it proved itself so to be.

Parnell was now at the summit of his power and reputation. It is true that the organisation of which he was head had been branded as a criminal conspiracy and convicted of outrage and crime, but the British public, though a law-abiding and crime-hating community, are very lax in their condonation of crime if it can be in any way associated with a popular political movement. There is ingrained in

the mind of the average man in the street the idea that Governments when in opposition to people "struggling to be free" (to use a platform phrase) are apt to be high-handed and arbitrary in their antagonism to such movements, that such high-handed action begets violence, and that, regrettable and reprehensible as are such deeds, a portion of the responsibility for their perpetration rests upon those governing the country where they occur. Such is the easy philosophy of the average politician when in opposition. This was the attitude of the Gladstonian Home Rulers during the whole of the struggle in Ireland between organised outrage and the executive authoritative Parliament. The murder at night of harmless civilians and the maiming and mutilation of dumb animals were horrible in themselves, but they could be explained away, and a portion of the censure which they provoked might be transferred to the Government for their mistaken policy.

Parnell now became involved in a transaction far less criminal and reprehensible than outrages upon man and beast, but one which could not be politically explained away. He was suddenly made co-respondent in a divorce case by one of his Parliamentary colleagues. The case, from the eminence of those affected by it, attracted general attention and was universally read down to the smallest detail. It was characteristic of Parnell that in his callous indifference to British public opinion he made no effort whatever to veil or cover up the transaction. It came out in all its details with the fullest possible publicity.

It will occur to most people that murder, outrage, the destruction of property and the maiming of cattle were offences more cogent against the morality of divine and human law than a liaison

between a bachelor and a married woman, especially if it were generally known that he intended to marry her as soon as the law permitted him. But the Nonconformist conscience did not so think. It had condoned the findings of the Parnell Commission upon murder and outrage; but a decree nisi in a Divorce Court was more than it could swallow. Parnell must go, and an intimation to this effect was made by Morley to Gladstone as the ultimatum of a great Radical caucus meeting held in the north of England. Gladstone thereupon, but not before, took up his pen and wrote a letter to Parnell in which he suggested to him in diplomatic and circumlocutory language a temporary departure from the scene of his activities until the storm had blown over. Parnell's secretary became the recipient of the letter, and he deliberately kept it back until Parnell had at an impending meeting been re-elected for the year as leader of the Irish Party.

Parnell brooked no rival, and in his masterful assertiveness he had always declined to take in any shape orders or instructions from any outside authority. Gladstone's letter infuriated him. He replied by a violent personal denunciation of the writer of the letter, impugning his sincerity and disputing the *bona fides* of his Home Rule declarations. It was a proclamation of war to the knife between the two men. The Roman Catholic Bishops then stepped into the fray. At first they showed a disposition to support Parnell, then they turned against him. All who watch Irish popular movements are aware that, while Protestant co-operation is always evoked at the commencement of a movement, if a Protestant becomes a real leader he is sooner or later shunted for one of the rival faith.

Parnell's turn had arrived, but he stood at bay with a ferocity, resource and vigour which astounded even those who knew him best. The division between the Anti-Parnellites and the Parnellites was roughly in the proportion of two to one so far as Parliamentary representation was concerned. A battle lasting for some time raged in Committee Room No. 15 of the House of Commons between these two rival parties. Although outnumbered and overmatched in debate, Parnell, by sheer personal determination, kept his assailants at bay for weeks. The language used and the respective attitudes of the combatants towards one another greatly outdid in truculence and violence the hottest Irish debates in the Commons, and the epithets habitually used in the past towards Irish Ministers seemed flavourless and mild compared with the vituperation with which the two parties belaboured each other. A formal secession was ultimately made by the majority from Parnell's leadership, and two distinct and antagonistic bodies were then formed out of the old homogeneous Home Rule Party. Parnell at once became the critic of the official Opposition, and in a marked manner he supported in the session of 1891 a Government Bill upon land in Ireland. The contest was then transferred to Ireland, and certain by-elections were fought with extraordinary fierceness by the two conflicting parties; but the priestly influence and the latent hostility which his overbearing personality had sown were too much for Parnell. He was defeated at election after election, and the personal strain imposed upon him by this continuous fighting was more than he could bear. It was reported that he was ill. He suddenly came back to England to his wife, and a few days afterwards, to the intense surprise of the

political world, his death was announced as occurring on October 7th, 1891.

John Redmond succeeded to the leadership of the remnant of the Parnellite Party, but he was subsequently defeated at Cork and had to take refuge in Waterford. Justin McCarthy became the head of the Anti-Parnellite Party.

Thus ended the career of the most remarkable and inscrutable character I ever met in politics. Step by step he gained his power and influence by a dogged adherence to tactics at once extortionate and unreasonable. By a continuous misuse of the rules of procedure in debate he so embarrassed Parliament and the Government as to make himself a force to be reckoned with. In this respect he was absolutely deaf to all instincts of fair play or give-and-take ; but he put the Irish Party in a position of authority and influence in the House of Commons which they never attained before, and being so entrenched he was able to dictate terms to those who wanted his political co-operation. I have often wondered if, had he lived, he would have been a real help in solving the everlasting Irish tangle. If he had not taken to political life he would have been a remorseless utilitarian. As it was, in his early life he was a very harsh landlord ; his only relaxation was practical mechanics and their application to mining and industry. Of sentiment, romance or poetry he had not a glimmering, and his speeches clearly indicated this want of emotion ; but they showed throughout a high concentration of purpose upon practicability. He had none of the tricks or devices of the popular orator ; he never attempted to make an altruistic or unselfish appeal to his audience. Unlike most of the popular orators, he put objects before words,

consequences before transient applause. He never made an important speech without carefully weighing in advance how far the language he used would further him another step to his ultimate goal. To use a military phrase, the objective to be gained was limited, but he generally achieved it. To tradition he did sometimes appeal, but only in the sense of inflaming against England the latent hatred of certain sections of Irish opinion. A man so constituted could not fail to have within him certain instincts of statesmanship. The bunkum and rhodomontade so dear to Irish orators he swept summarily on one side. He was an aristocrat to the tips of his fingers; he treated with chilling hauteur all his followers save one or two intimates. To them he evinced the charm which a strong man can generally command when he unbends. He had no belief in popular government or control, as is shown by his disparagement in his letters to Mrs. O'Shea of the movements and people whom he controlled and met. He was an irreligious Cromwell—apt, just but inexorable, the stamp of governor or government the Irish Celt wants and under which he thrives. Throughout the earlier stages of his leadership he was in the dilemma in which all agitators find themselves who try to combine a nominally constitutional agitation with secret societies of violence and murder. In justice to him it must be said that he was very averse to extremist methods, but he dared not openly denounce or flout the societies behind him. He kept on the border-line by eulogising the benefits obtained and half-heartedly repudiating the violence employed for their attainment. His ruling impulse was dislike of England imbibed with his mother's milk, for she was an implacable foe of Great Britain. Had he,

apart from this feeling of hostility for England, any real love for Ireland? Would he, if he could have obtained a Home Rule Parliament, have respected the limitations imposed upon it and endeavoured to observe his part of the compact? I doubt it. But, at any rate, so long as he was alive he was not only a plenipotentiary with whom a national bargain could be made, but he had put himself in such a position that he could enforce upon his followers for the time being any terms to which he agreed. By sheer force of will and indifference to any opinion save his own he ground into shape and into a homogeneous unity the discordant elements of Irish antipathy to England.

It was almost comical to notice the utter collapse of the official Opposition so soon as Parnell withdrew his support from them. The Queen's Speech passed almost without debate, Bills were introduced and Estimates agreed to with almost bewildering celerity, and the whole business of the Government, both in 1891 and 1892, passed with a smoothness and lack of opposition which was an amazing contrast to the hard and continuous fighting which hitherto it had been our lot to encounter.

About this time an attempt was made by a group of Welsh members to establish in the House of Commons the principle that Wales was so distinct a nationality from Great Britain as to require separate treatment. In many ways, on Bills, resolutions and in debate, an endeavour was made by this knot of Welshmen to differentiate thus between Great Britain and Wales. Foremost amongst them was a young member called Lloyd George. He had taken a very prominent part in the dispute between Lord Penrhyn and his quarrymen in North Wales. The manager of these works was unpopular, and the

controversy resolved itself into a fight between Lord Penrhyn's right to nominate a manager who suited him and the workmen's claim that they should have a voice in the nomination and selection of such a manager. After a long and acrimonious fight Lord Penrhyn, by his imperturbable equanimity, won, and the quarrymen were badly beaten.

A great many discussions took place on the subject in the House of Commons. Lloyd George then signalised himself by the violence of his attacks on Penrhyn and other Welsh landlords.

Shortly afterwards a Bill was introduced to give the ecclesiastical authorities of the Church of England greater powers than they possessed in dispensing with the services of criminous clergymen (that is to say, clergymen who, from misbehaviour, came into contact with the law), and a Bill for this purpose was brought into the House of Commons. Gladstone was an ardent supporter of the principle embodied in the Bill, and so was the great majority of the House of Commons. A small group of members, headed by Lloyd George, flouted Gladstone's authority, and, contrary to all sense of justice and fair play, endeavoured to deprive the Church of England of the right of getting rid of its black sheep. Here, again, discussion was bitter, and in it Lloyd George took a prominent part, but he rarely, if ever, polled more than twenty followers. This obstruction was a barefaced misuse of the procedure of the House; and was openly prompted by a desire to increase the unpopularity of the Church in Wales by keeping criminous clerks in their incumbencies.

There were various other controversial subjects in which Lloyd George took a keen interest, invariably enlisting himself against the interests of

Church, land and Unionism. During this period he was learning to speak. He had a charming voice, a great facility of expression and a very free Celtic imagination, and he always attracted attention by the virulent intensity of his speeches and demeanour and the personal imputations which he showered right and left upon his oponents. Not only did he bitterly oppose the Boer War, but he publicly asserted that Chamberlain had a corrupt motive in advocating it. This course of defamation he continued right up to the outbreak of the Great War in 1914. He then at once dropped the rôle of a demagogue and assumed an attitude of resolute patriotism which he has maintained ever since.

Quite recently I met a very clever lady who had known Lloyd George from his infancy. She was a Welshwoman and well aware of the good and bad attributes of her race. She told me that Lloyd George was the incarnation of many of its best qualities and of some of its worst defects. He was fitful, masterful, emotional and inaccurate. On the other hand, he had any amount of pluck, resilience and receptivity and an intuitive instinct for finding out in any controversy the point of least resistance and shaping his course accordingly. Plausible compromise rather than stable settlement was the bent of his interference and of his action, and he lived so much for the present that he was apt unduly to disregard the future. He was very kind to those whom he liked, and he had a genuine sympathy for all who were in trouble or distress. He was the son of a Unitarian Minister, and when he commenced public life his education had been limited, his knowledge of general subjects slight and of world-wide politics nil. Though he had little business or financial aptitude, yet as Chancellor of the Ex-

chequer, when confronted at the beginning of the war with financial and economic problems of perplexity and peril, he successfully met them with drastic measures such as moratoria and compulsory interference with the free play of the money market. No highly trained Chancellor of the Exchequer would have ventured upon such heterodoxy or taken such risks.

Writing, as I now am, three years after the conclusion of the war, it cannot be disputed that it was largely due to Lloyd George's persistence and audacity that we won. Unfortunately, he has not been equally successful in handling the industrial and economic problems which were the aftermath of the war. In reply to a distinguished soldier whom I met and who was indulging in wholesale abuse of Lloyd George, I said, "You cannot deny that he won the war for us." "Yes," replied the officer; "but he has made the price of everything since the war double what it ought to be." And here I come to what I think is his special racial weakness. He cannot help making himself pleasant to the deputations who come to see him, and when the demand of a deputation is to get from him something out of somebody else, he is too ready on the spur of the moment to fall in with their request.

Still, one cannot fail to have sincere admiration for one who has overcome all the difficulties of lack of wealth, influence, education and station and who has held his own successfully for many years with the biggest men whom the world could produce. One may grumble at and lament his indiscretions and impetuosities, but we owe him an eternal debt of gratitude for the courage and leadership which at critical moments—both during the war and afterwards—he has exhibited as the head of the British Government.

CHAPTER XXI

THE account that I have just given of Parnell's political collapse and death somewhat upsets the chronology of the period upon which I am writing. Although Ireland was to the outside public apparently the only subject upon which the House of Commons was engaged, a great deal of non-Irish useful work was done by the Government, and the legislation necessary to effect our objects set in motion influences which have since been continuous in the change and development they brought about.

In 1890 we introduced a Free Education Bill, abolishing the fee payable by the parent to the school at which his child or children had to attend. It gave a relief which was much appreciated at the time. These fees ranged from a penny to ninepence per child weekly, and in abolishing it we took the average between these two limits and this gave about threepence per child to each school. But this average did not work fairly in practice. There were in the manufacturing districts—notably in Lancashire—so-called voluntary schools which existed on high fees and the payment by the Education Department on the results of their examinations. They were the best and most efficient schools in their respective localities and attended by the children of the high-class artisans who gladly paid the larger fee to protect their children from the ailments and diseases which contact with ill-nourished and neglected

children not infrequently engendered. These schools could not exist on a threepenny fee, and the inability of such schools to support themselves necessitated fresh educational changes promoted some twelve years later by Balfour in 1902.

A Naval and Military Committee of the Cabinet was in this year established and subsequently grew into the Public Defence Committee, the unity and organisation of which alone saved us from destruction in the earlier stages of the Great War of 1914-1919. An Irish Land Purchase Bill was also carried, thus developing the only principle on which the impossible system of dual ownership could be justly terminated. By the steady application of purchase we have almost eliminated from Irish woes the old and murderous antagonism in vogue so long as the dual system of ownership was in force.

Churchill's health had of recent years steadily deteriorated, and with it his power of speech and political activity. He was a mere shadow of his former self. A voyage to and stay in South Africa was suggested to him by his friends, and before leaving he made a very touching speech to his relatives and friends.

The collapse of Parnell and the ill-health and temporary retirement of Churchill very much eased the position of the Government in the House of Commons, and it was well, as our chief, W. H. Smith, began to show evident signs of exhaustion and overwork. His sister died about this time, and he told me on his return from the funeral that his family was not long-lived, that sixty-five or thereabouts was an age which they seldom passed, and that he was just arriving at that period. The worry over the Parnell Commission had greatly weakened him.

Upon his shoulders in the preceding year, in addition to all his strictly official work, had fallen the whole burden of the action by which alone the liquidation of the House of Baring was averted. For several years past he had suffered terribly from eczema, his arms being entirely swathed in cotton-wool to alleviate the acute irritation caused by contact with any rough substance. In 1891 suddenly all these spots and irritation ceased, and their disappearance was associated with an attack of gout. We did not think much of this ailment, as Smith seemed cheerful and to be recovering his strength.

The Kaiser paid in July a visit to this country, and Salisbury entertained him for some days at Hatfield. It was a magnificent reception. The large house and several minor residences in the town were packed with the notables of the country and the Kaiser's entourage. On the second day of this visit Smith arrived, looking worn but in good spirits. Whether he caught a chill that night, the weather being cold for the time of year, or whether the gout touched some vital organ is not known, but at any rate next day he looked ghastly. He asked Edward Stanhope and me to walk with him in the park during the afternoon, which we gladly did. After we had gone a little way, he said, "The air has done me good, but I am tired, as I did not sleep last night. I will go in and lie down." He came to dinner, but all who saw him were shocked at his appearance. No one could look at him without seeing that Death had claimed him. He went to bed early and was taken up to London next day; but he was incapable of further work, and he died a few weeks later at Walmer Castle, having just accepted the office of Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports.

His death was very widely lamented by the public, but to his close associates it was a loss for which nothing could compensate. In my own case I lost not only a chief for whose character and guidance I had the highest respect, but a friend and companion whose political and personal career had been inseparably interwoven with my own for the past twenty-three years. We came into Parliament in the same year ; we were for some years the only Tory representatives in the whole of the constituencies of London north of the Thames ; we had been colleagues in every Tory Government since 1874 ; we had worked hand in hand, not only on questions inside Parliament, but in all that related to the organisation and development of the machinery necessary to make effective the Tory vote in the vastly augmented constituencies of North London. I cannot recall a single difference of substance or principle during the whole of this period of joint work. It was very hard to differ permanently from Smith. I never came across any man whose judgment was so well balanced, whose forecast was so sound and so soon realised, or who, when once a decision was arrived at, pushed it with more courage and decision. In the political world, where fluency is a power and speech the first test of a man's capacity for public life, strength of voice is not infrequently associated with strength of will and a weak voice with a lack of character. Smith was a poor speaker, and his voice was weak, with no variety of cadence. It took the House of Commons some years to find out after Smith became its leader, that behind these unattractive failings there was an immense courage, a rare industry and an unfailing sense of duty. In physical contests there is always an admiration for the pluck which enables an over-

matched man to stand up boldly against one greatly his superior in physique. But in a perpetual mental fight the courage which night after night sustains a politician to fight successfully the intellectual and histrionic odds against which he has to contend from the special endowments of his opponents is a pluck of a higher, nobler and more enduring type than any mere physical display of endurance.

For years in debate and in all the arts and wiles of Parliamentary duelling Smith was heavily out-matched by Gladstone and Parnell ; yet night after night he stood up serene, smiling but indomitable, and when, at the end of four years' unbroken fight, the results were noted and embodied in legislation and policy, Smith had won all down the line. He was, in my judgment, the most successful of all the House of Commons leaders that I have known or served under. His opponents' two main objects were to make Ireland ungovernable and the House of Commons unmanageable. Then Home Rule would of necessity become inevitable. In Ireland law and order were rehabilitated, the procedure in the House of Commons was so improved as to make the majority masters, and a mass of most useful legislation, including a great scheme of Local Government, a Mines Regulation Bill, a Free Education Bill, the total reorganisation of the Navy, the establishment of a Public Defence Committee, were, in addition to many other Acts, placed upon the Statute Book. If Smith could have strutted about and advertised his remarkable achievements, the public would have realised what it had lost by his death.

His career was extraordinary, if not unique. He had no public-school or university training. As a

boy he went into his father's business—at that time quite small, but which he made into a gigantic monopoly for the sale of penny newspapers at a profit. Having placed this business, by his careful selection of subordinates and by bold and expensive experiments, upon such a footing as to outvie competition, he came into political life. He began his official career as Secretary to the Treasury ; he then went to the Admiralty ; in 1885 he was Secretary of State for War ; and then, Ireland being the danger-signal, he became Irish Secretary. Again he returned to the War Office, and when Churchill suddenly resigned the leadership of the House of Commons he was asked by Salisbury, and with the unanimous approval of his colleagues, to take Churchill's place. He had become a very rich man ; no one could have made a better use of his wealth. Though he was a munificent Churchman and a most generous landlord and employer, he never refused response to outside and deserving appeals ; he was the truest and most reliable of friends ; and he carried to a higher standard than any public man I have ever known his constant admonition to the House of Commons : " Do your duty."

CHAPTER XXII

SMITH's death necessitated the selection of a House of Commons leader. In public opinion, three excellent candidates were in the running—Beach, Goschen and Balfour. The first two were not only senior in Parliamentary service, but they both had behind them a longer record of official work in the highest posts of administration. In the Parliamentary world, however, there was practical unanimity that the younger and less experienced man should succeed to the vacancy. Balfour's rare and attractive gifts of speech, his indifference to criticism and his unfailing ability to more than hold his own in the roughest sword-play of debate had endeared him to the whole Unionist Party. His youth and charm of manner made him the darling of the female politician and Society leaders; the comic papers dubbed him "Prince Arthur."

In coming home with Beach from Smith's funeral, he said to me, "There is, under existing conditions, only one candidate for poor Smith's post; the Party will have no one but Balfour." Goschen, admirable as had been his work and high as his claims could have been put, took exactly the same view.

Astounding as it may seem to those who do not know Ireland or understand Irish mentality, it is a fact that at that moment Balfour was the most popular man in that country. He had smashed up the Land League and relieved the agrarian com-

munity at large from the terrorism which this organisation had exercised in the districts where it was supreme. He had made mincemeat in debate of the rodomontade and exaggeration upon which the Irish politician lives. Despite the abuse still showered upon him by the Nationalist Press, the people at large knew that he had been their saviour.


As soon as order was re-established, Balfour made clear that his object was not repression of legitimate public opinion, but by measures such as Land Purchase, Light Railway Acts, Congested District Boards and prompt relief to districts suffering from shortage, to ameliorate the whole of the social and economic structure of Ireland. Dillon, the most vitriolic of Nationalists, made a violent attack upon him for his management of the distressed in certain districts in the West of Ireland. The Swinford Board of Guardians, an extreme Nationalist body, passed in consequence a stinging vote of censure upon Dillon, stating that they preferred an official like Balfour, who had tried to meet their wants, to a professional politician whose voice and attitude were purely obstructive and unhelpful.

The session of 1892 was uneventful, for the shadow of dissolution was too near to encourage the prosecution of any serious contentious business. To find a successor to Balfour as Chief Secretary for Ireland was no easy task. He had so effectively done his work and Ireland was so quiescent, that it was thought advisable to appoint in his place a good man of business who, whilst firm in the impartial administration of the law, would bring capacity and experience to bear upon the development of the material prosperity of Ireland. Jackson, who for the past five years had been an ideal Secretary to the Treasury,

supplied just the qualities required for such supervision and work. A number of changes throughout the Ministry necessarily occurred, and the re-election of certain Ministers who had been promoted had to be pushed through. So great was the shock given to the whole Radical organisation by Parnell's death and collapse that all the Ministers seeking re-election were easily returned.

Hartington, through the death of his father, was called up to the House of Lords. Thus each wing of the Unionist Party in the House of Commons was simultaneously deprived of its old leader—a subtraction of practical sagacity from our councils which we could ill afford.

There was not a Parliamentary kick left in our opponents in the Commons. The Address was voted after only four days' talk, and Navy and Army Estimates passed through with little criticism. Both sides concentrated their attention upon election issues. The writs were issued in June. The contest was dull so far as new matter or parties were concerned. Both wings of the Unionist organisation were now so cemented together as to ensure the avoidance of triangular duels. It was, in our judgment, a certainty that we should be beaten, but not by much. The daily discharge of duty during six years of office is sure to alienate a certain proportion of the voters, and an inextinguishable craving for change always influences sections of the electorate. It is not generally known how small a percentage of change, if spread over a large area, can convert an apparently irresistible majority into a minority. Five to ten per cent. is more than sufficient to overthrow any Government. I estimated that Gladstone's majority would be between 38 and 45. This was not a bad



shot, for, including 81 Nationalists and Parnellites, his followers numbered 355 against 315 Unionists—a majority of 40, too small a margin to enable them, except by the inexorable application of the closure, to carry through contentious or hard-fought measures.

The Government, though in a minority, determined to meet Parliament. The old Speaker was re-elected; and then Asquith was put up to move officially on behalf of the joint Opposition a vote of want of confidence upon the Address. He had greatly distinguished himself as a Junior Counsel before the Parnell Commission, and he had also evinced exceptional powers of speech in debate. He was clearly marked out for permanent Parliamentary distinction.

For some reason or other which at that time was not very intelligible, it was considered necessary to spin out this debate for four nights. Upon such a foregone conclusion and upon such thrashed-out matter it was not very easy to get speakers on our side. I went out of London before the concluding day of the debate, and during my absence a letter requesting me to sum up the debate on our side missed me. Harry Chaplin, being in town, had to take my place, and lucky it was that he did so. I never have been of any use in talking against time. Chaplin was gifted with rare fluency of speech, and as a rule could spin out his talk to any length. On the night in question it was from a tactical point of view most desirable that we should pool our full strength, but certain of our Party were slack, and at 9.30 we were considerably short of our full numbers. The Opposition was fully aware of this.

Chaplin was our last speaker, and he had a most difficult task for more than an hour and a half in

talking against continuous interruptions and jeers. But he held his own gallantly, and though constantly gravelled for want of matter, he still continued to talk. At 10.50 all but two of our men had arrived, and these two were at last located and found to be playing billiards at the Carlton. This was known to the Opposition, and the noise redoubled. Poor Chaplin, at the last gasp of endless perorations, was informed, "Five minutes more, old boy, and it will be all right," and so he held on. In came the two culprits, and amidst the vociferous applause of both sides he sat down, having most successfully discharged the unpleasant duty imposed upon him.

The amendment was carried by 350 to 310, the exact majority of the recent election, and next day Salisbury resigned office.

Goschen had summed up in his electioneering campaign the record of the work of the Admiralty. He had every right so to speak, as without his aid this enhancement of strength would have been impossible. His statement was as follows :

"In 1886 we had 499 breech-loading guns afloat and in reserve ; in 1892 we have 1,868. Of light quick-firing guns we had 33 in 1886 ; in 1892 we have 1,715. Of torpedoes we had 820 ; we now have 2,874. Of seagoing ships at home and abroad and in reserve we had a tonnage of 342,000 ; now it is 544,000. Of ships of 15-knots speed and upwards afloat and building, excluding torpedo-boats, we had 57 ; we now have 140. Of officers and men we had 61,400 ; we have now 74,100. I say that is progress which we put before the people to show that the money has not been wasted, that we have something to show for our money, that we are a stronger people more ready to defend our interests in every part of the globe. Our coaling-stations are better

defended, our arsenals are more secure, our men are armed with better rifles, and they return to more sanitary barracks."

The actual increase in material and personnel was not the most noticeable feature of importance. In organisation, in mobilisation, in the maintenance of adequate reserves both of men and material and their adaptation for emergent use, the Navy had made and was making extraordinary progress. It was no longer a fleet on paper, but one in full being and thoroughly efficient.

In looking back over a long official experience there is no part of my career which was so joyous and exhilarating as my Admiralty appointment. I was First Lord almost continuously from June 1885 to June 1892, though there was a short break in 1886 during Gladstone's short-lived third administration. Provided you can come to terms with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, at the Admiralty you are less subject to interference from outside either from Parliament or from your colleagues than is any other Department. Your work and the Service of which you are the head do not departmentally intrude themselves into the ken of other offices. You may be asked on their behalf to do certain work or make certain a distribution of ships; but this comes to you rather as a favour to be granted than a compulsory requisition. If you ask your Naval Board judiciously and tactfully and select them carefully, they become a great help to you inside the office and outside a protection against interference. Unlike the War Minister, the First Lord of the Admiralty is acknowledged and treated by the whole of the Navy as their head. Loyal and willing service is

given to him. Compliance with his orders and any information he wants are always forthcoming. Naval officers have no axe to grind except the promotion of the efficiency of their service. Thus a homogeneity of aim is established and maintained (provided you make efficiency and not mere economy your primary object) such as exists in no other Department of State. The First Lord's business is to steer the Navy through Parliamentary and political difficulty; the business of the Naval Lords is to help him and show him how to reform and improve those branches of the Service which are under their respective control. They may ask for more than can be given them, but if the objection is *bona fide* and reasonable, they will be the first to accept it.

The principle which we were enabled to establish through the operation of the Naval Defence Act and the ideas it embodied next year brought Gladstone's political career to a close. Goschen, who knew his unfailing propensity to starve Navy and Army expenditure, was most anxious that our naval policy should be so protected by an Act of Parliament as to prevent the future Prime Ministers from smothering it. The Act came to a termination in 1895, and the shipbuilding it sanctioned, which in volume diminished year by year, could not be curtailed except by a repeal of the Act. It was, however, competent for a future Government to nullify the object of the Act by refusing in the final years of its operation to supplement its diminishing output by a fresh building programme.

We left office in 1892, and in the next year Gladstone brought his obstructive instincts into play by refusing to acquiesce in the continuance of the shipbuilding necessary to maintain our standard of

equality with the combined fleets of any two nations. The country had learned its lesson ; it approved of this policy of increased insurance. Members of Parliament were cognisant of this feeling, and Ministers generally were in favour of it. The story of Gladstone's compulsory retirement is graphically told in Lord Morley's *Recollections* (vol. ii, pp. 1-10). As the old man was obdurate, Morley was commissioned by his colleagues to inform Mrs. Gladstone that her husband must go at once or in February 1894, and so he did. The full details, however, of his retirement belong to the narrative of the succeeding year, 1894.

CHAPTER XXIII

GLADSTONE'S new Cabinet had a smaller number of Whigs in it than he had hitherto been accustomed to accommodate. Granville was gone, and, with the exception of Rosebery, the younger Whigs had shown few signs of exceptional ability. A desperate effort was made by Labouchere to include himself in the Cabinet; but the Queen was obdurate against his claims, and Gladstone, not unwillingly, acquiesced in her objection. Labouchere attracted a good deal of attention whilst an active Member of Parliament, and he was popular in certain circles; but I frankly own that his tricks and personality were very repugnant to me, and I am certain that he would have been an intolerable nuisance to any Cabinet of which he became a member. Amongst the other offices, Harcourt took that of Chancellor of the Exchequer and Morley returned to his old place in Ireland. Lord Spencer succeeded me at the Admiralty, and a number of young Radicals, of whom Asquith was the most notable, were distributed throughout the Government.

Ireland at once dominated the situation, and a Royal Commission was appointed to enquire into the cases of evicted tenants. Sir James Matthew, who was a Judge of the High Court, a Radical and a man of autocratic temperament, was made chairman of the Commission. Soon after its appointment the Commission broke up and accomplished little or

nothing during its sittings. This was largely due to a personal altercation between the chairman, Sir James Matthew, and a young barrister named Carson, who was the landlords' representative. Sir James, little knowing the man with whom he had to deal, tried to browbeat Carson by refusing to him the full rights of cross-examination. In the argument which ensued Carson had much the better of it ; and as Sir James adhered to his decision, Carson withdrew himself and his clients' case from the cognisance of the Court. The enquiry subsequently broke down, and Carson, who had hitherto been only known as a fearless and very successful criminal lawyer, scored the first of his many successes in political life.

The recess was uneventful ; the after-effects of the election occasionally cropped up, usually taking the form of questioning the accuracy of the statements made by the winning party. The recent election had generally been fought with little acrimony or violence. The issues had been so thoroughly discussed in the preceding Parliament that the platform speeches were merely a repetition of what previously had often been said. The Radicals contended that Ireland could not be governed except by a system of Home Rule ; we replied by saying that without Home Rule we had made Ireland more prosperous, quiet and self-controlled than she had ever been before.

Parliament met in January, and on February 13th the Home Rule Bill was introduced by Gladstone, but the interest and excitement aroused by his second Bill was in no way comparable to that caused by his first effort. Then it was a novel and audacious departure from the accepted and accredited canons

and traditions of a century of British Prime Ministers and statesmen, and the age and antecedents of the daring adventurer gave a romantic novelty to his enterprise. Six years of hard experience and contact with the realities of Irish life and demands left a much smaller margin for empirical prophecy and optimism. As a physical and intellectual exhibition (for Gladstone was in his eighty-second year in 1892 as compared with seventy-six in 1886), this performance was astounding: voice, manner, gesture and elocution such as any young man might envy and envy in vain; but as a practical solution it was as futile as his previous proposals. All the old fallacies were paraded with pomp: the happy combination of Austria and Hungary, Sweden and Norway, Russia and Finland, the anxiety of the great mass of Irish people to live on terms of amity and goodwill with Englishmen and loyalists within the limits and conditions of an Empire in which the Parliament at Westminster was to be the sole and only authority—these and a good many other delusions were again trotted out and caparisoned with the impassioned rhetoric of a consummate orator and actor. It was felt on our side that, after the experience of 1886, it was advisable, as soon as Gladstone had finished, to put up at once a Front Bench man to follow and traverse his whole contention. It was not easy to get anyone to undertake so onerous a debating task, and, assuming the man was found who was ready to undertake this duty, would he be adequate to it? Edward Clarke was finally fixed upon as the speaker, and he was well qualified for the task: he was one of the best leading speakers of the day, he had an admirable Parliamentary style, fearless, straight and self-confident, and both

in the law courts and the House of Commons he was a tower of strength in an emergency. He spoke for three-quarters of an hour, following Gladstone up and down, backwards and forwards through all his tortuous pleadings, and he reduced to proper proportions the emotional utterances he so effectively analysed. It was one of the best debating performances I have ever listened to, and it had a most admirable effect throughout the country, as the leading articles of the Unionist papers had supplied a most telling and effective criticism of the new Government proposals. On my congratulating Clarke next day, he said, "I am glad our friends are pleased. It was a tremendous brain-strain, and for the first time in my life I had, after speaking, a severe headache for an hour or two."

In the subsequent debate little novelty or originality was shown by those taking part in the discussion. Asquith at once stepped into the forefront of ministerial speakers, and whilst supporting this Bill, he announced, in the sonorous platitudes to which we were afterwards accustomed to listen, his unalterable opposition "to any Home Rule scheme which did not maintain unimpaired and unquestioned the supremacy of Imperial Parliament over all persons and all matters, whether local or Imperial."

Asquith has an exceptionally clear brain and sound intellect. Few men in political history of this country have been more intellectually gifted. The formula to which he here gave effect has in debate and on the platform been the dominant note of the Radical Party in all proposals, whether relating to Ireland or India, by which Home Rule is to be established. Is it possible that they really believe what they say? If it be argued that a portion of the

British Empire is racially and in other characteristics so different from the dominant Imperial race as to necessitate its recognition as a special, national or self-governing entity, how can any man pretend that after this admission Imperial authority can be enforced over the community so enfranchised except with their consent? You cannot declare war against your quondam subjects because they, having been recognised as a separate and distinct nationality, have their own ideas as to how they are to be governed. Moreover, the machinery ostensibly set up to settle and enforce Imperial authority over such autonomous districts is ludicrously inadequate and unsuited for that task.

Amongst the various big men whom the United States have sent to this country as their Ambassadors, none ranks higher as a jurisprudent and constitutional lawyer than Mr. Phelps. He was discretion itself, and could not be induced to discuss the Home Rule Bill or its provisions, though from the standpoint of a great constitutional lawyer accustomed to plead before the Supreme Court of the United States on questions of controversy between the Powers of the Federal Government and the sovereign rights of the individual, his knowledge would have been most valuable. Shortly after his retirement from his ambassadorial duties he died, and Sir Henry Maine, who was very intimate with him, communicated to me the purport of the last conversation he had with him. Phelps expressed a very high opinion of the ability of our legal men. In civil and criminal procedure he considered them fully equal to the legal profession of his own country, but there was one form of constitutional jurisprudence in which they had little or no experience. Of the class of

question which was constantly coming up before the Supreme Court of the United States as to the definition or limitation of the relative powers of Federal and State Governments our lawyers knew little. The drafting of the Home Rule Bill, especially as regards the clauses dealing with controversy and disputes between the two Governments of Great Britain and Ireland, was, in his judgment, conclusive proof of this ignorance and want of experience. The foundation of the constitution of America was investing every American citizen with certain indefeasible rights expressed in language which was incontrovertibly clear. Upon the rights so conferred was reared the system of State and Federal Government. Consequently, any individual or corporation could dispute the power of any authority, either statutory or legislative, which in any way interfered with their inherent rights as American citizens. A large—if not the larger—proportion of the appeals to the Supreme Court originated from individuals or corporations. Thus the friction, jealousy and resentment necessarily arising from controversy between Federal and State Governments were largely mitigated by their becoming merged in less inflammatory disputations. Under the Home Rule Bill, owing to the total lack of a written constitution, whenever a difference of opinion arose between the British and the Irish Parliaments, it must partake more or less of the character of an international dispute—two Parliaments in collision, two antagonistic nations behind it; and I think Mr. Phelps added that he did not believe that the Home Rule scheme would stand the test of twelve months' working.

Phelps's criticism only endorsed what all Unionists

from the first have said, that all schemes for Home Rule so far put forward are paper schemes which not only cannot work in practice, but are so flimsy and inept in their conception that they cannot withstand criticism. Thus the unsparing and wholesale closure of debate is a necessary concomitant of a Home Rule Bill. It cannot stand discussion; but for the reputation of those who introduce it, it must be represented as a workable scheme and shoved upon the Statute Book as such. The political party who thus carry Home Rule buy the Irish Nationalist vote at the price of a disruption of the Empire: the party payment is received at once; the penalty for its encashment has to be borne by posterity.

We have become so accustomed to unworkable Home Rule Bills being shoved through Parliament by hook or by crook that the public does not realise the full iniquity of such transactions. These Bills are not ordinary legislative measures which can be amended, altered or repealed by the legislature passing them, if in practice they prove unworkable and mischievous. They purport to be a solemn international contract between two nations, the junior contracting party having, previous to signing the contract, been recognised as a distinct and separate nationality in order that they might become accredited signatories. This contract cannot in any way be altered except by consent of both nationalities. From the absence of any written constitution of any kind in this country, the Home Rule Bill is an attempt to evolve a written constitution out of unwritten practice and tradition—a task almost impossible in itself, even if time, experience and investigation were given to the elucidation of the mass of problems

of every kind which it raises. No attempt at any such examination has ever been made by the Radical Party. Gladstone suddenly at a moment's notice started the chimera of Home Rule subject to Imperial Parliament without making any effort whatever in advance to solve and elucidate the difficulties he raised. For partisan reasons the mass of his followers took his lead, not having the courage to tell him or the country the chimerical nature of the schemes they were foisting upon the public. A true patriot, if convinced that Home Rule was an unavoidable necessity, would have shaped his course very differently. Whilst announcing the goal for which he was striving, he would have pointed out the obstacles which had first to be overcome and declined to move until he could put forward plans for surmounting them. All the debates upon Home Rule to which I have listened have been make-believe discussions. The closure and the passage by watertight compartments of unworkable propositions took the place of debate and analysis of the schemes before the House. I will give an illustration.

The forces of the Crown were to be outside the control and cognisance of the Irish Parliament, and a clause forbidding legislation upon such subjects was in the Bill. I pointed out that if the prohibition was intended to be really effective it should apply to resolutions as well as legislation. With the whole power of the executive behind it, the Irish Parliament could by resolution stop all recruiting for the Imperial Forces. I therefore moved to make the restriction applicable to resolutions as well as to legislation. Gladstone became very angry ; he charged me with incurable distrust of the proposed new Irish Parliament—so much so that I would not even allow

them, if hereafter we won a great battle such as the Battle of Waterloo, to congratulate England upon the achievement. His contention, nonsensical as it was, was supported by the usual mechanical majority. The power to interfere with recruiting for Imperial purposes and to upset the whole military system in Ireland was, in spite of his declaration to the contrary, to be given to the Irish Parliament.

Debates carried on under such conditions raise a spirit of resentment amongst those closed which daily obtains fresh momentum. It is difficult to treat with consideration or even courtesy arguments and statements that bear on their face the stamp of insincerity and bad faith, but when a process of this kind is in operation for discussing a scheme upon which the whole civil, religious and Imperial rights of a large population akin to us in race, religion and policy depend, the strain on temper becomes unendurable. The debates become more and more acrid and angry, and, the closure being applied with more and more severity, the maintenance of order inside the House becomes more and more difficult.

At the commencement of the session the Government made a great mistake in their selection of the Chairman of Ways and Means. Mr. (afterwards Lord) Courtney had discharged the duties of that office with great ability in the preceding Parliament. He was not popular with our men. From his ultra-conscientiousness he was much stricter in his application of the rules of order and debate to the Unionist side than he was to the Home Rule Party. Still, notwithstanding this tendency, his strength of character, intellect and adaptability to unforeseen difficulties were generally recognised, but he was

a Unionist, so he was put on one side for a respectable Radical lawyer. This gentleman, though well-meaning, was wholly unsuited to the task imposed upon him, and the Committee under his chairmanship became more and more rowdy and unmanageable. On the last night of the Bill in Committee a very discreditable row broke out, ending in personal encounter between certain members. It arose in this way.

The Committee was very noisy, and on both sides remarks, generally of a provocative character, were made. Amongst the Radical party was a member named L——, not at all a bad fellow, but very excitable, a born bruiser and when excited apt to be dangerous. He was on the rampage that night, looking out for a quarrel. Something Carson said infuriated him, and he ran to the Front Opposition Bench evidently with the intention of striking him, but at the critical moment he forebore to strike, and instead precipitated himself upon an already well-packed bench. Two men behind him tried to push him off, and the Irish members below the gangway, seeing a scuffle, jumped up *en masse* and in their hurry to get to the scrimmage tumbled over one another, falling upon Unionist members in their seats. One of them landed on the top of Saunderson's hat. Those so assaulted naturally pushed off their assailants, but, so far as I know, no blow was struck. As soon as anything like order was re-established, Speaker Peel was sent for. His majestic figure, his splendid voice and inherent dignity of demeanour almost instantaneously overawed the tumult; the disputants, when asked to explain, became like naughty schoolboys before a headmaster, so apologetic and deprecatory was their defence. Order was

not only restored, but a feeling of shame and contrition filled the whole Chamber.

Gladstone was terribly upset. He must have had an innate consciousness that the origin of this unseemly row was due to the tactics adopted by his Government. This transaction, coming as it did at the tail of unparalleled closure over the House, brought general discredit upon the Government, and though the third reading was carried in the House of Commons by 301 to 276, the Bill, when taken up to the Lords, was thrown out by 419 to 41. This smashing majority only represented the feeling of the country. The Bill, from the day of its introduction, had steadily receded in popularity. The impracticability of its provisions, the insincerity of the declarations as to the supremacy of Parliament and the futility of the machinery for their enforcement had so impressed the existing electorate that for twenty years no Government ventured to propose a similar Bill. When a Home Rule Bill next made its appearance, as it did in 1910, it was brought forward not because it was required or could be made workable in Ireland, but as a bargain between the Radical Party and the Irish Nationalists. The latter, if they had voted according to their convictions, would have thrown out the Budget of the former Party, so the Radicals induced the Irish to vote for what they did not like, the price paid being the disruption of Great Britain and Ireland and the break-up of the Constitution of England. By a just Nemesis both political organisations which were party to this nefarious transaction are now politically defunct.

Carson not long ago in the House of Commons traversed the allegation that the union with Ireland had failed from its inherent defects. He asserted,

and with force, that if it had been left alone it would have succeeded; but it was the venality of the English Radicals and their bid for Irish votes when in a Parliamentary minority that upset its satisfactory working. Whenever the Radicals had a majority independent of the Irish, Home Rule disappeared into the background. It only came to the front when they could not obtain office otherwise. The price for Home Rule votes had to be paid by Ulster, who was to be sold into political bondage in order that Radicals might sit in Downing Street.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE Home Rule Bill being rejected by this overwhelming majority in the House of Lords, the question then arose—what would its progenitor do? Would he sit still under the rebuff, or would he appeal to the country against it? Lobby gossip is seldom thoroughly reliable, but in this instance subsequent facts tended to confirm the report that Gladstone did wish to appeal to the constituencies, but that his colleagues were practically unanimous against so suicidal a course. Towards the close of the year gossip was again active as to Gladstone's retirement, and a curious confirmation of this rumour came to my ears which at the time I dismissed as mere tittle-tattle, but which has since proved itself to be quite correct.

Gladstone could not resist his old besetting failing—a love of scamping Naval Estimates. At the instance of Balfour and Chamberlain I put down in December 1893 a notice amounting to a vote of censure on the Government for their naval policy. At that time my eldest son was reading for the Foreign Office, and amongst others in his class was a son of Lord Acton, one of Gladstone's closest and most intimate friends. Quite casually my son said to me one day, "By the bye, young Acton says that the notice you have given upon Naval Estimates will drive Gladstone out of office and that he will retire in the next three weeks." I thought no more

about this prediction, though Gladstone did retire early in February next year, for it was always assumed that he went on account of his failing sight and health. Morley, in his *Life of Gladstone*, draws a pathetic picture of his Cabinet imploring him, in spite of his defects, to stay on and still guide them. "His colleagues carried almost to importunity their appeals to him to stay, to postpone what one of them called and many of them truly felt to be the moment of anguish" (see page 509, vol. iii, Morley's *Life of Gladstone*).

In 1917 Morley published another book, entitled *Recollections and Diaries*. In this publication (pp. 1-10, vol. ii) an entirely different version of Gladstone's retirement is given at length. He was made to resign by his colleagues, and Morley was the mouth-piece of this ultimatum. But the most significant part of the narrative of these daily diaries is the admission that although Gladstone was to go, his resignation was not to be associated with curtailment on Naval Estimates, as "that would wreck the Party." I propose to quote largely from these diaries, as they are so extraordinarily interesting, not only in the new and accurate light they give of Gladstone's exodus as a politician, but upon the admission involuntarily made by the diarist himself of the strength of popular feeling upon the maintenance of a strong Navy. So strong was this feeling that Morley, although he disapproved of the proposed increase in the Naval Estimates, hesitated to resign. Such a resignation must, in his judgment, wreck the Party.

The great additions made to the electorate by the Reform Bill of 1884 had, to a large extent, swamped the old niggardly and skinflint policy of the Man-

chester School. It is true that the mass of the recently enfranchised escaped direct taxation out of which new burdens of expenditure were mainly defrayed; but, independently of this personal consideration, the wage-earning classes are very proud of the Navy, and they have an instinctive belief that without such adequate naval insurance the supplies of food and raw material from over the seas upon which they depend would in times of emergency be seriously imperilled, in which case they would, to a large extent, become wageless and foodless. What, however, they did require before embarking upon large Naval Estimates was some assurance that the extra expenditure, if sanctioned, would be effective. The great reforms in dockyard and naval administration effected by Salisbury's Government gave them that guarantee. I was compelled to speak in many places in the country in support of the Naval Defence Act, and I was agreeably surprised to find how popular were its provisions; but this promise of support was conditional and associated with and dependent upon a good return. I doubt if Gladstone and his colleagues were fully cognisant of this change in public feeling. He certainly was not, and thought he could still, by the mere *ipse dixit* of a Prime Minister, force the Admiralty to accept decisions of which they disapproved.

The year 1893 was one of active naval propaganda. France and Russia were now firmly cemented in alliance, and Russia, in response to this close feeling of amity, proposed to embark on a very large programme of capital-ship building. Anyone who has studied the naval war map of the world is aware that the geographical positions of France and Russia

are such as to give them, if in alliance, distinct geographical advantages for naval purposes against the British Empire. To counteract these strategical advantages it was necessary for us to keep the great bulk of our fleet in distant waters; in fact, a satisfactory strategical position could only be secured in certain stations by keeping there a local superiority of force.

The Naval Estimates for 1893-4 were not satisfactory. In substitution for two capital battleships which the late Government proposed to build, two big cruisers were suggested, large in size but only gunned with a secondary armament. Lord Hood of Avalon, who for many years had been associated with me at the Admiralty and who was the highest living expert upon the relative strengths of the navies of the world, in a very impressive speech in the House of Lords in the month of May pointed out the necessity of enlarging our programme if the standard of strength recently laid down was to be maintained, and Salisbury later on, at a great meeting at Ormskirk, urged the same policy. Outside the Houses of Parliament an active propaganda went on. I wrote an article for a well-known periodical—on the strength of the Navy, in which I showed that if our Fleet was to be maintained at the level of the two-power standard we unquestionably must largely increase our Estimates; and I read another paper before the Royal Statistical Society which had a very wide circulation, entitled "Ocean Highways," in which I demonstrated the dependence of this country on the waterways of the world being kept open, not only for food supplies but for maintenance of the mass of national industries.

Inside the Admiralty the same feeling was sim-

mering. Admiral Sir Frederick Richards, a most determined administrator, had now become First Naval Lord, but though a good writer, he was not gifted with any power of speech. It was known that in the autumn of 1893 he had pressed large demands upon Spencer, his civilian Chief, amounting, as was subsequently shown, to £3,126,000. Richards had the unpleasant knack in argument of always repeating over and over again the same words and figures. In an interview which he had with Lord Spencer lasting for two hours it was stated that the only words he used were £3,126,000. Lord Spencer offered him a million, then two million, then three million; to each and every offer the reply was £3,126,000. Richards had his naval colleagues with him. If he resigned, they went too; and if all went, Spencer could not stay on. It was, therefore, with a general knowledge of what was going on both inside and outside the Admiralty that in the month of December I gave notice of the following motion :

“ That in the opinion of this House it is necessary for the maintenance of the security of the country and the continued protection of British interests and commerce that a considerable addition should at once be made to the Navy. This House therefore calls on his Majesty’s Government to make before the Christmas recess a statement of their intention in order that immediate action may be taken thereon.”

I knew that Gladstone was to follow me, and in making my speech upon this motion I was extremely moderate, kept well within the facts and converted my statement into the form of a proposition of Euclid. It was dull, but it was quite unanswerable.

Gladstone had nothing to say except to appeal to old traditions and to rake up old theories and ideas, which, to his great surprise, elicited little response.

Both Chamberlain and Dilke spoke very effectively on behalf of my proposals. What saved the Government was a speech by Harcourt. Harcourt had taken a great interest in the Navy, and his views, so far as I could gather, were both sound and advanced; but he did not like to argue against his chief. He, however, informed the House that he had been in consultation with the Naval Lords and that they were satisfied with the present expenditure. This assertion reassured the House, and the Government maintained a majority of 36, viz. 240 against 204, upon my motion.

Next day there was a rumour—which subsequently turned out to be true—that the Naval Lords wholly repudiated the interpretation which Harcourt had put upon their views and that they had threatened to resign *en masse* unless he publicly repudiated the statement he had made. Harcourt extricated himself with great skill out of the difficulty in which he had placed himself. To do him justice, all he had done was to put too favourable an interpretation upon the replies to certain leading questions which he had put to the Naval Lords, but this incident created an unpleasant and hostile feeling towards the Government. The impression outside the immediate entourage of the Government was that the House had not been fairly dealt with as regards naval expenditure and that a division had been snatched by a misrepresentation of facts.

Morley's diaries now take up the story. All that I am about to quote will be found in pages 1 to 10, vol. ii. The Cabinet situation is thus described:

"When the Bill met its fate its author began silently to revolve the question of his own continuance in command. A sharp controversy within the Cabinet brought the question to an issue. Naval Estimates were proposed by Lord Spencer. The Prime Minister judged them to be grossly excessive. The Admiralty was urgent, and Spencer was by temperament obstinate. He carried a decided majority of the Cabinet with him. Time passed, a series of singular perplexities ensued" (p. 1.)

"We had a Cabinet on January 9th, 1894. Accommodation on Navy Estimates seeming to be out of reach, was the decision on the ulterior consequence of the fact capable of delay? Could this be postponed till February 15th? It was decided to adjourn, and we were informally to consider these points amongst others" (p. 1).

"The view undoubtedly was that now is the accepted time for our Chief's resignation, that it would be against Mr. Gladstone's honour to remain at the head of the Government whilst the Estimates of which he disapproved were actually being framed."

"Much buzzing amongst the Cabinet, men coming to my room and talking things over and over. Most of them were at this stage of affairs—"this-weekers" and not "next-monthers," *i.e.* for a definite Cabinet on Thursday or Friday followed by the Prime Minister's immediate retirement" (pp. 4, 5, and 6).

Morley goes to dine in Downing Street and delivers the ultimatum :

"After dinner in the drawing-room Gladstone at once sat down to backgammon with Armistead.

Mrs. Gladstone then carried me to a sofa behind an ornamental glass screen, and I then found with a minute of consternation that I was to tell her the fatal news. Mr. Gladstone had said to her on his return from the House that I was going to dine, that he was fagged, and I would tell her how things stood. It was as painful as any talk could be. However, I had no choice. I told her that the reign was over, and the only question was whether the abdication should be now or in February. The poor lady was not in the least prepared for the actual stroke. Had gone through so many crises, and they had all come out right in the end; had calculated that the refreshment of the coming journey to Biarritz would change his thoughts and purpose. I told her that language had been used which made change almost impossible. Well, then, would not the Cabinet change when they knew the perils with which his loss would surround them? I was obliged to keep to iron facts. What a curious scene! The breaking to her that the pride and glory of her life was at last to face eclipse, that the curtain was falling on a grand drama of fame, power and acclamation: the rattle of the dice on the backgammon board, and the laughter and chuckling of the two long-lived players sounding a strange running refrain.

This, however, was not the end. The final stage did not arrive for several weeks. Three or four he spent at Biarritz (viz. January 13th to February 14th) with little gain of composure."

On February 1st Sir Algernon West made the following communication from Biarritz:

"The statement that Mr. Gladstone has definitely decided, or has decided at all, on resigning office is untrue. It is true that for many months past his age and the condition of his sight and hearing have, in his judgment, made relief from public care de-

sirable, and that accordingly his tenure of office has been at any moment liable to interruption from these causes, in their nature permanent. It remains exactly as it has been. He is ignorant of the course which events important to the nation may take even during the remainder of the present session, and he has not said or done anything which could in any degree restrain his absolute freedom and that of his colleagues with regard to the performance of arduous duties now lying or likely to be before him."

Morley's diary continues :

"I came back from Ireland to meet him on his return from Biarritz. He revived the idea of a speedy dissolution. I said I was against it" (pp. 6 and 7).

Now follows this curious but involuntary admission. Opposition to an increase of Naval Estimates would be so unpopular in the country that it would wreck the Party associated with such restrictions. Morley's diary deals thus with this awkward fact :

"About my own position I put it plainly once more in this way : 'I stay because if I were to resign on ships, you would have to resign on ships too, and that would wreck the Party. If I resign on ships, you cannot resign on eyes and ears ; but that is what exactly, to save the Party, you desired to do. Therefore on Irish grounds I stay.' " (p. 7).

A curious non sequitur !

"A fortnight of curious interludes came next. There was a Cabinet dinner on the 17th February. It was expected that the Prime Minister would tell

us that he was going to resign at once, on what day, what he was going to say, and what we were to set about doing or not doing. . . . We ate our dinners expectantly : the coffee found the oracle still dumb, and in good time a crestfallen flock departed."

" Six days later (February 23rd) a Cabinet, and at the close of the business he said in a quiet ordinary voice something to the effect that when the Prorogation Speech was settled it was understood that the moment was come to ' end his co-operation with the members of the Cabinet ' " (p. 9).

It is needless to say that when Mr. Gladstone did retire he did so with all that dignity and self-control of which he was so consummate a master ; but there was not a word said by him or by any of his colleagues which in any way indicated what was the real cause of his retirement from office. The comment one would make on these diaries is : If Morley approved of Gladstone's opposition to the Navy Estimates, why was he the member of the Cabinet authorised to tell him that he must retire ? And why, if he retired, did not Morley retire too ? No public man in my day more sedulously courted public opinion or kept his eye more closely upon it than did Gladstone. It is curious that he should altogether have failed to note the great change which had taken place as regards the maintenance of adequate naval establishments ; but I assume he was so wedded to and obsessed by the economical theories to which he had so long given expression that he could not believe that the very foundation of his financial policy had been inverted. Those, however, of his colleagues who were younger and less self-opinionated men evidently thought differently, or they would not have taken upon themselves the extreme

measure of sending an ultimatum to so distinguished a chief.

Looking at the episode as a whole, I think one may excuse the efforts made by Gladstone's colleagues to conceal from the public the true facts connected with his resignation. It was a piece of political camouflage carried out to secure an honourable exit from public life of a great chief who had so often led them to victory.

Gladstone's exodus from the House of Commons, in my opinion, deprived that assembly of its greatest charm. In common with most of his political opponents, I disliked at times his political methods and vagaries, but to watch him at work was most fascinating. His resilience, assurance, inimitable histrionic and forensic gifts always secured for his audience on any really difficult task a display of the highest intellectual and artistic gifts. His mercurial temperament was such that you could never foresee or accurately anticipate the occasion or the cause of these superlative exhibitions. So long as he was there, he was the magnetic centre of every discussion or controversy. At times there was no fly too small at which he might not rise, but the thrower of the fly would soon learn that he had not only hooked a big fish but a fish that would certainly break him. Up to the end this game went on, a marvellous exhibition of responsive vitality in an advanced octogenarian. There was also a moral lesson which throughout his whole career he preached and practised and which the House of Commons of late years has to some extent ignored. Whatever office he held or whatever parliamentary work he undertook, into it he put his whole being. He would have scorned, possessed though he was of an incredible

power of speech, to rely on that power and not on a thorough and accurate study in advance of the questions with which he had to deal. No man took more trouble by assiduous labour to prepare himself for public or Parliamentary work. No man could struggle harder than he did to master the details and ramifications of the measures he proposed, and he expected all his colleagues and subordinates to do the same. He set a standard of devotion to Parliamentary duties and to public service that acted and reacted right throughout the House of Commons so long as he was alive. Subsequent leaders have not been so self-sacrificing. Dialectic skill, smart debate points, have been substituted for sound knowledge and previous preparation. Is it to be wondered at that those who have attempted to substitute this counterfeit currency for the gold standard of the past find themselves sinking and not rising in the estimate of the public they wish to influence ?

CHAPTER XXV

THE selection of a successor to Gladstone was exceptionally difficult, not merely from the huge gap to be filled, but from the dissensions amongst those who were eligible. Harcourt in Parliamentary aptitude and experience was head and shoulders above the rest of the Cabinet, but his aggressive demeanour and caustic tongue had so alienated certain of his colleagues that they would not accept him at any price. The choice ultimately lay between Spencer and Rosebery.

Gladstone, in spite of his differences on naval expenditure with the former, favoured his selection. Morley favoured Rosebery, and his choice was endorsed by a majority of the Cabinet. To be a success where Gladstone had failed, even under the most favourable conditions, was an almost impossible achievement, but, so far as Rosebery was concerned, the conditions under which he accepted the leadership were such as to banish any possibility of success. His bright and sarcastic powers of speech, his strong Imperial policy and Whig exclusiveness, did not endear him to the dour Manchester School politicians and pacifists who constituted the majority of the Cabinet. His ignorance of the House of Commons and the dominant influence Harcourt there exercised made any further difference between himself and his chief lieutenant a certain victory for the latter. From the moment his premiership started it was clear

that the Radical element in the Cabinet had made a great mistake in shunting Harcourt.

The session of 1894 was almost exclusively occupied by the great financial measures embodying a new and extended application of death duties. Harcourt steered this measure with consummate ability and patience through the House of Commons. The proposed legislation was litigious to the last degree and hit very hard the heirs to large fortunes ; yet this long, contentious, and complicated measure was carried through the House of Commons without a single application of the closure—a most remarkable performance and reflecting the highest credit upon Harcourt as a Parliamentary tactician. Yet he was subordinate to a young Whig peer and made so by the personal action of his colleagues.

In the autumn of 1894 a very acrimonious controversy sprang up in the London School Board as to the syllabus of religious education to be adopted in the London schools. Moderate men like myself, who knew that the so-called religious difficulty emanated almost entirely from influences outside the schools and was almost wholly political in its object, watched with great disapproval the resuscitation of this unprofitable contention. Two extremists were in command of the contending forces. Mr. Diggle, a very able speaker, generalised the Church Party, and Mr. Lyulph Stanley (afterwards Lord Sheffield), an educationist of exceptional experience but bitter to the last degree against Church teaching, became head of the militant Nonconformity. The fight was carried from the Council Chamber to the poll, and after an incredible amount of personal abuse and literature had been expended, the two parties emerged from the fray in almost equal

numbers—29 supporting Mr. Diggle and 26 adherents for Mr. Stanley.

I was suddenly and unexpectedly asked to allow my name to be put forward as a candidate for the chairmanship of the School Board, it being possible under the Statute to bring in an outsider as Chairman. I was reluctant to plunge into this cauldron of religious controversy, as I did not feel that I had either the aptitude or the knowledge requisite for the office offered me. I consulted Salisbury, and he strongly pressed me to comply with the request made. He seemed to think that I had an inherent wet-blanket element within me which would damp down the heat of the more violent of the protagonists. I was elected by a strict party majority of three. I made a moderate and strictly judicial speech before taking the chair, for the minority had spoken very bitterly against me. Almost at our first sitting Diggle, obviously wrong, appealed to me upon some point of procedure, and I at once decided against him. From that time onward I never had any difficulty or captious criticism from my opponents on the Board. They loyally supported me whenever they could, and when I resigned a year later both sides were equally considerate in their estimation of my conduct as chairman.

My previous estimate of the hollowness and insincerity of this controversy was confirmed by my subsequent experience. On both sides there was deplorable and unjustifiable exaggeration. The extreme Church Party maintained that School Board education in London was godless and irreligious, in spite of the fact that religious instruction on an admirably conceived syllabus was daily given in the schools. Political Nonconformity pretended that

the most extreme and narrow dogmas and doctrines of the Church of England, to the exclusion of the general tenets of religion, were taught in rate-supported schools, and the only proof they could produce in support of this wholesale indictment was the assertion of the Divine origin of the Founder of Christianity. A number of leading Nonconformists declined to pay rates on this plea; yet for many years past they had without protest allowed a Jewish syllabus of religion approved by the Chief Rabbi and taught by Jewish teachers to be part of the daily curriculum in Jewish schools maintained by rates. How is it possible in such circumstances to arrive at any conclusion other than this, that the motives of this agitation were political not religious, sectarian and not national? At the very moment that the inner civil life of London was turned upside-down by these fanatics, in the neighbouring borough of Acton, which was part of my constituency, a most sensible and different programme was being enacted.

The population there was increasing by leaps and bounds, and the school accommodation, including voluntary schools, was wholly insufficient. These voluntary schools were under the control of a number of broad-minded clergy, and they said to the local School Board: "Let us come in and form part of the local supply of schools. We will lease our schools to you, reserving one hour or more a day for religious instruction, and you shall appoint and control all the teachers of such schools." The suggestion worked admirably. There was only one case in a long series of years of any teacher declining to give the religious instruction required in these schools. Nonconformists' and Churchmen's children alike attended them. The boys in one family might go

to a Board School and the girls to a Church school, or vice versa, yet so harmonious was the whole working of this experiment that when the Chairman of the School Board was appointed to be Bishop of Bombay the vacancy was filled by a leading Non-conformist minister. Gladstone more than once expressed his high appreciation of the conduct of this School Board, and he was supposed to have stated that they deserved to have a statue in solid gold put up to their memory.

The two impressions which I took away with me when my chairmanship of the School Board terminated were the inordinate time the School Board contrived to waste in transacting their business, and secondly, the very poor educational return obtained on the expenditure sanctioned. The whole procedure of the School Board was dilatory to the last degree. The Chief Committee was composed of the whole Board, fifty-five in number. Whenever a vacancy for a headmaster or a headmistress occurred, it was competent for anybody on the Board to bring forward the name for the vacancy of any teacher who was qualified. Hours were wasted, the merits of the respective candidates being descanted upon by their supporters. When the vacancy had been filled, and another occurred a week afterwards, the School Board went through exactly the same programme. This is only one illustration of the waste of time running through the whole procedure. It is a significant feature of democratic administration that suspicion underlies the whole transaction of business. Nobody seems disposed to trust anybody else. Neither the officials nor the chairmen of the Committees were given adequate power. If it was proposed to give half a crown extra to any employee of one part of

London for exceptional work, the matter was discussed and rediscussed, and unless the advance was made general, no matter what the capacity of the individual for whom the increased remuneration was originally proposed, it would be rejected, and members were proud of this performance, as it showed that they stood up for the rights of their individual constituencies.

The School Board sat for the greater part of the week and for a good many hours a day. This consumption of time placed upon the majority of members a strain which they could not well stand. In the much more extended investigations which a few years later I had to make as Chairman of the Poor Law Commission into the general local administration of the country, I found exactly the same phenomena in every branch of administration—a dislike to give adequate authority to either chairman or officials. Consequently, the whole local administrative machine was creaking from overstrain. Whenever it was proposed to add any further duties to those performed by the existing authorities, they asserted that they had not the time to give attention to them and a new special authority for this purpose must be created. Yet in other countries one municipality or one local authority transacts—and effectively transacts—a far greater variety of duties than is the practice in Great Britain.

My experience forces me to the conclusion that unless local authorities largely increase the numbers and authority of their officials or co-opt from outside persons of administrative experience and authority, our system of local administration will break down, or at any rate become so deadlocked as to force the community to have recourse to

much more bureaucratic or autocratic methods of administration.

Ever since Elementary Education became nationalised its cost has steadily and continuously risen. No reasonable public man could object to such an increasing outlay if it were associated with corresponding educational results. Can anyone pretend, even the most enthusiastic educationist, that such is the case? Forster, in introducing his Education Scheme in 1870, calculated that the rate might be threepence in the £: it is at present in many localities at least two shillings, and rising. Our present Education Minister, who by profession and experience is a very high authority upon scholastic questions, has introduced a general scheme the cost of which from taxes alone will be over fifty millions a year. Adding the increased and continuous burdens simultaneously imposed upon the rates, the total burden laid upon the community will be little short of £100,000,000 annually. It is an expenditure far in excess of what any other European nation either incurs or contemplates. Whatever be the fault or failing of our system, it certainly is not parsimony, nor can it be said that our teachers are inefficient or apathetic. My own personal experience of the teachers (though I admit it is perfunctory and intermittent) points to the very opposite conclusion. They are very keen about their work, and most of them thoroughly competent. If, then, our educational failure is not due to lack of funds or want of ability and energy on the part of the teachers, it must be the system and the curriculum based upon the system that are in default.

I was for five years Chairman of the Commission upon the administration of the Poor Law, and in the

course of our enquiries we had to gauge the cost contributing to or warding off unemployment and indigence. We accumulated an enormous mass of evidence taken from every class and from all schools of thought, and the overwhelming consensus of this vast mass of testimony was very condemnatory of existing educational methods. The summary and conclusion of the Commission upon this part of their enquiries were thus epitomised (Part IX, para. 128):

“ Before we leave the subject of education we must refer to one criticism that has been made with almost absolute unanimity. There seems to be outside the circle of the teaching profession a very strong general feeling that the education of our children in elementary schools is not of the kind which is helpful to them in after-life. Education is the accepted antidote to unemployment and pauperism. The cost of elementary education in this country in 1905-6 was twenty million sterling. This is almost entirely a new national charge since 1870. It should have steadily reduced unemployment and diminished pauperism. If it has failed in this, its accepted mission, it cannot be said that the failure is due to lack of funds. The desire of the young to raise themselves in the social scale and improve their position should ever be encouraged, but this desire seems to us too frequently to take the shape of trying to avoid handicraft and manual labour by recourse to other occupations which, though associated with a black coat, are less remunerative and less progressive than skilled handiwork. Clerical labour is a glut upon the market; high-class artisans are, according to our evidence, at times obtained with difficulty. We doubt if the atmosphere of our school life is altogether congenial to a career of manual labour. We would suggest to the Board of Education the advisability of meeting these criticisms by

a thorough reconsideration of the time-table and curriculum in our elementary schools as well as of the aims and ideals of elementary education. Though employers of labour may perhaps be apt to look at questions too much from their own standpoint, still, the unanimity of opinion that our school curriculum does not supply the right class of instruction and training for industrial purposes cannot lightly be put on one side."

It was noteworthy that in the prolonged and almost ubiquitous investigations of public institutions we found that the young women trained in our elementary schools as a rule could neither sew nor cook. The first principle governing education should be that the subjects taught to children be chosen and regulated by the time the child is at school. Of all systems of instruction the most vicious and expensive is that in which an ambitious course is truncated before the child has such a grip of the subjects taught as to be able to remember or utilise them in after-life. The system of payment by results tended to make the children's education remunerative to the school but jejune to the child. Thanks to the late Sir Robert Morant, this mischievous principle has in the main been eliminated from our education system. Now, by abolishing half-timers, by raising the limit of age, by diminishing the size of the classes and encouraging continuation in higher-grade schools, and by facilitating entrance into Universities it is hoped that the subjects taught may be so gripped by the young as to be remembered and utilised by them in their subsequent practical life. But the expense of the experiment is tremendous, and one can only hope that the community at large may receive in improved industrial and inventive work

some return for the very heavy and increasing cost they have for so long a period been asked to bear.

The work of Chairman of the London School Board brought me much closer into the inner life, aims and difficulties of the wage-earning class than my previous offices, and it was very pleasant to know how in the poorer parts of London a well-regulated school under a kindly headmaster became recreative as well as an educational centre. In this respect there were a great many functions to attend, and I found my time very fully occupied by the engagements a Chairman was expected to undertake.

One evening I got home late, and about 1.30 a.m. there was an insistent knocking at my door. On opening it I found Lord Cranborne (the present Marquess of Salisbury) was my visitor. He said: "Excuse my coming so late, but my father sent me to find you upon an urgent matter, and as you were not in the House of Commons I came on here. There was a meeting of the Unionist leaders to-day at which my father, Chamberlain, Balfour, Goschen and James were present, and on the instigation of James it was settled that the adjournment of the House should be moved to-morrow on the question of raising the customs duties on cotton in India. It was believed by James that all the Lancashire members would support him, he being a Lancashire member, and the Government might in consequence be put in a minority. Since this decision was arrived at, Balfour has been suddenly attacked by influenza, and as you are the only person on our Front Bench who knows anything about these duties, my father wishes you to take charge of the debate and sum up on our side."

Nearly the whole of my next day had been mapped

out for me in advance in connection with education work, and some of these duties I could not transfer ; but I felt that I must, in the circumstances, accept this request from my Chief. I said that I would go down early next morning and see him on the subject. Fortunately, on my table there was a Blue Book just issued by the India Office, reporting the details of the proposed taxation. I read this rapidly before I went to bed, and my old knowledge of the subject came back to me quickly.

The cotton duties imposed in India upon Lancashire piece-goods raised a radical issue in a subtle but acute form. Lancashire is naturally in favour of the free import of these goods into India. India is equally strong in wishing to curtail such imports by protective duties. Each side has cogent arguments in support of its contentions. Each has great political influences at its back. Lancashire puts pressure upon the House of Commons to adopt the same fiscal principles in India as it maintains at home. India puts pressure upon its Government to encourage the expansion of a growing national industry by preferential or protective treatment. Salisbury, when Secretary of State for India, got rid of this venomous controversy by the abolition of the duties. They brought in a small revenue, and alterations in other directions enabled us to dispense with them without imposing new taxation.

In 1894 the Indian Government was hard up, owing to the fall in the value of silver, which necessitated the transmission to England of an increased number of rupees or their equivalent to meet gold obligations. They proposed to reimpose (but in another form) taxation upon Lancashire piece-goods. The Government, being ardent supporters of the

Manchester school of economy, repudiated all idea of protection. Revenue without protection was their only object, and they made the preamble to their legislation a declaration that if it could be shown that their proposals were in any direction protective, the protective element would at once be eliminated.

I tried in vain to see Salisbury and the other Unionist leaders, but they were all away from home, except Balfour, who was ill in bed. I could not get to the House till late, but I heard enough of James's speech to realise that he had not mastered the elementary features and dangers of the controversy. His speech was one of the worst, considering the reputation of the speaker, I ever heard made. He laid down on behalf of Lancashire dangerous and untenable pretensions over Indian taxation. He imputed personal and mercenary motives to Indian mill-owners ; in fact, he left unsaid all that he ought to have said, and said what he ought not to have said. Fowler, who was Secretary of State for India, quite rightly pounced upon James, and in a very fine speech not only traversed and refuted his extravagant contentions, but he also made an effective appeal to the House to stand by him as Minister for India in protecting the far-away interests committed to his charge against the greed and rapacity of interested British manufacturers. The speech made a great impression upon the House—so much so that Goschen, who had been a party to James's motion, got up afterwards and threw himself in an impassioned speech upon Fowler's side. Knowing that I was to sum up, he talked to me before he spoke, saying that he only wished to say a few words and nothing that would embarrass me in my summing up ; but he

was carried away by his emotion and went much further than he had intended.

Fine as was Fowler's speech so far as the actual points in contention were concerned, he had delivered himself into my hands. He had repudiated all idea of protection, going so far as to say that he would at once repeal any portion of his scheme tainted by this blemish. His scheme was to impose a 5 per cent. customs duty upon all cloth above a certain fineness of cotton and to counteract this by a 5 per cent. internal duty upon all yarn in India of the same fineness. In the one case the duty was levied upon the full value of the manufactured cloth; in the other upon the value only of the unwoven yarn, and the difference was very substantial. Fowler was therefore bound, in the terms of his speech, to rescind the scheme which so clearly violated the fundamental condition he had laid down. We had a poor division and a still worse Press, but within less than a year Fowler's duties were abolished and an even tax of $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. was levied on all cloth above a certain fineness, whether foreign or native.

Although certain Indian millowners objected, the substituted scheme worked well on a basis of perfect equality. For reasons which I will subsequently explain I became, upon the break-up of Rosebery's Government, Fowler's successor as Secretary of State for India; but this appointment was in no way caused by my speech, although my Radical opponents were kind enough to attribute the heavy beating they got in Lancashire in the election of 1895 to the blime the Secretary of State for India (as I then was) had in this debate most improperly offered to the cotton industries of Great Britain.

Before leaving this question it may be worth

noting the extraordinary quickness and facility with which any highly organised industry such as the cotton trade adapts itself and utilises for its own advantage a differential system of custom duties. To get inside the tariff without paying and thus obtain the higher price by substituted goods becomes at once the object upon which the manufacturer concentrates his attention. The law or principle of substitution, if cleverly worked, effects wonders ; that is to say, an article is made to look like and sold as the taxed article, but is composed of untaxed raw materials. My own personal experience of this operation was given in a speech of May 18th, 1896, by which time differential duties were abolished :

“ The experiment was tried in India in 1878 of drawing a line through cotton goods, taxing cloth above a certain quality of fineness and exempting those below this quality of fineness. The result was astonishing. Before this experiment was made the free goods imported from England amounted to 9,000,000 yards, the amount of duty-paid goods being 350,000,000 yards. In the first year of the change the duty-paid goods fell to 323,000,000 yards and the duty-free goods rose to 99,000,000 yards. In the subsequent year the duty-paid goods fell to 164,000,000 yards and the duty-free goods rose to 360,000,000 yards.”

I commend this experience to all those who wish to build up our Imperial trade on differential principles. I do not contend that it cannot be done, but the principle in practice is a double-edged weapon and requires the most detailed and thorough investigation before it can be adopted with safety.

Reverting to the session of 1895, upon the Address Chamberlain moved an amendment and was only

beaten by 14—297 against, 283 for. The Parnellites voted against the Government, and this political declaration on their part made the Government's tenure of office more precarious than before.

At the beginning of this year Randolph Churchill, whose long illness had prepared the public for the worst, passed away quietly, though he had made an heroic fight against a fatal disease. Right throughout the year 1894 he endeavoured to speak in the House and attend public meetings, and although in these efforts there were occasional gleams of the old ability, for the most part of his speeches he was inaudible if not incoherent. Both Harcourt and Balfour paid a fine and merited tribute to his rare ability and meteoric career. What a mystery and enigma is failure or success during life! Why should a gifted and talented man die a failure for the lack of some moral ballast? And why should a mediocre man, free from any glimpse or touch of genius, be a success and a benefit to his own and to future generations? Is it the possession of the ethical or the want of the intellectual gifts that creates this success? It may be that genius from its volition is less associated with character and common sense than mediocrity; but it seems a waste and a misuse of glorious human material that it should so often be sterile because it cannot be humdrum.

CHAPTER XXVI

THIS year's Naval Estimates showed an increase of £1,100,000 over the previous year's expenditure, which Gladstone had declined to sanction. With this indication of the trend of national policy and public opinion, the Cabinet were right a year back in hustling their Chief out of office. His retention must have resulted in a public breach between him and their policy tending to the disintegration both of the Government and the party behind it. Although the shipbuilding programme was enlarged, it was not embodied or stabilised by an Act of Parliament.

Mr. Speaker Peel having held his office for twelve years—a period of continuous Parliamentary tumult—not unnaturally felt the strain of his long tenure of the difficult combination of duties—judicial impartiality and the expedition of Government business. The conflict between these two obligations when new powers for the Chair are required to control increasing factiousness and obstruction at times becomes acute. The House of Commons cannot be allowed to degenerate into a bear-garden, yet it is the Opposition who benefits and the Government who suffers from such disorder and chaos. Every fresh rule and its enforcement is of help to the Government of the day and is intended so to operate. To help the Government is therefore the duty of a high judicial official, but any help so given must be in the guise of maintaining the dignity and decorum of the whole House. If a Speaker

once goes beyond such a justification, he becomes branded as a partisan and is liable to be tripped up in the subsequent interrogation which his action suggests. It is marvellous to note how the traditions of the Chair steady and guide successive Speakers, even although in previous posts they may have been strong adherents of one or another of the two parties between whom they have to adjudicate and interfere. No man ever had in this sense a more continuous and difficult task than Mr. Speaker Peel. Not unfrequently he had to restrain during Home Rule debates the ardour of his old Chief, Gladstone, but his presence, voice and power of speech were such that, stern as he was to recalcitrants and rowdy members, he never lost the respect of the overwhelming mass of the House. The Irish Nationalists were the party with whom he most came into collision, but his lofty impartiality and urbane consideration endeared him even to this section of the House, and their tribute to him upon his retirement was generous and genuine.

Mr. Gully, K.C., was selected by the Government as his successor, and his appointment was confirmed by a majority. It was a bold venture. He was a very young Member of Parliament, he had never spoken, and his attendance at the House was very fitful. Amongst his friends he had a high reputation for firmness and fair play, and his appearance, manner and voice were ideal. He knew little or nothing of the rules, procedure or precedents of the House of Commons. I believe, in the opinion of those proposing him, this was his chief recommendation. The rules of the House of Commons are the growth of centuries of practice; but the whole conditions of Parliament have so changed, even during the last two centuries, that the principles which the rules originally attempted

to enforce have vanished or metamorphosed themselves beyond recognition. There is in consequence a multiplication of rules enshrouded in a mass of verbiage which makes the procedure for transacting business antiquated and absurd to the last degree. The born obstructionist makes it his first business to master, so far as he can, the so-called rules of debate, and with the knowledge thus obtained to thwart as much as possible any attempts at their simplification or improvement. It was, therefore, a great advantage to place in the chair a man of judicial mind, legal training and firmness who would be disposed to adapt and interpret the rules for the convenience of the House, instead of making the House the slave of bygone interpretations of obsolete regulations.

Mr. Speaker Gully fully realised the anticipations of his friends. He gradually got control of the House, and by his lucid and businesslike rulings he greatly accelerated the discharge of public business. It was a quieter House during his Speakership than that over which his predecessor presided. There were fewer scenes, less changes in the rules, fewer discussions on his rulings, but by tact, judgment and consistent rulings he improved to a marked degree the whole machinery of the House of Commons.

The session dribbled on, the Government becoming steadily weaker in the House and more unpopular in the country. I fancy the Cabinet Councils were the reverse of harmonious, and there undoubtedly was an antipathy between the Prime Minister and certain of his colleagues which constantly manifested itself. They were an unhappy family, anxious for some release from a position which gave them neither authority nor distinction. In a small House

they were beaten on an Army Vote by a majority of 5—132 to 127. It gave the Prime Minister the opportunity he wanted of escaping from his undignified position, and he resigned. Tactically the resignation was a fatal blunder ; he ought to have dissolved. It may be that he would have found it difficult to write any electioneering manifesto which his colleagues would accept, but to resign as he did gave us on the platform an unanswerable case. On what does a general election turn ? It is a question of popular confidence between the political parties appealing. Each should be able to say, Give us a majority, and we will show you how the country should be governed. But if one party has a majority and throws up the sponge on the plea that it cannot continue to govern, it puts an irresistible appeal and argument into the mouths of its opponents. That argument was repeated and enforced from every Unionist platform, and greatly affected those to whom it was addressed.

A few days before the polls I was walking home with George Wyndham, and, discussing the probable results of the impending election, he said, "I think we shall have a majority of 50." "It will be a great deal more," I said : "I put it at 150." It was a good shot ; we came back with a majority of 152.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE events of the past decade (it was then ten years since Gladstone hoisted the Home Rule flag) tended to bring the two sections of the Unionist Party into very close relations. Each supplied what the other wanted. The Liberal-Unionists were short of voting power, we of men of real governing capacity. Our two separate organisations, although they had withstood the dangers and depression of success and defeat and had ultimately emerged stronger and in closer touch than before, at times did not work satisfactorily together. Recurrent disputes as to the selection of candidates and the apportionment of individual seats had cropped up and had only been solved by the tact and intervention of the leaders. But in the framing of a policy, whether it was that of opposition or of promotion, I must say no such antagonism had occurred. On the contrary, in all such matters the two parties had moved and acted as one. In Lord Salisbury's last Cabinet Goschen was the only representative of the Liberal-Unionists. It was felt now that this was a very inadequate representation, and the overtures which Lord Salisbury made to Hartington, Chamberlain, Lansdowne and James to join the Government were heartily reciprocated, and arrangements were further made for a proportionate inclusion of Liberal-Unionists in the minor offices of the Ministry. The Cabinet thus formed was one of exceptional experi-

ence and ability. There were six men in it all of whom were personally qualified or capable of filling the post of Prime Minister—Salisbury, Devonshire, Goschen, Beach, Balfour and Chamberlain. It is rare, if not unprecedented, to have so much proved ability in the Ministry. In the past "Governments of All the Talents," as they were dubbed, there was plenty of ability, but it had never before been associated with such a practical experience of men and matters.

This advent in force of Liberal-Unionists into the Cabinet so reduced the higher appointments available for the Toryside of the Coalition that I quite expected to be left out, unless I went back to my old post at the Admiralty. To my surprise, the *Gazette* suddenly announced the appointment of Goschen to be head of that office. As I had done all the work of representing during Opposition the naval policy of the Unionist Party, and as Goschen, who was my most intimate friend, had never whispered to me any wish to become First Lord of the Admiralty again, I was taken aback at this announcement. Meeting Salisbury the day after this announcement, he told me to come and see him next day. He wanted me to be in his new administration, but he added: "Goschen has taken away your birthright by declining any office other than that of the Admiralty." When I next saw Salisbury, he asked me to go to the India Office. This, next to the Admiralty, was the post I most fancied, as I had been so well grounded in Indian questions through my long tenure of office as Under-Secretary. On my first contact with Goschen I asked him why he had never let me know that he wanted to go back to the Admiralty. He evaded a direct answer, but said in his friendliest

way : " I have done you a good service ; it is much better for you to go to a new office than to go back to your old groove of daily work." The truth was that Goschen, with his keen instinct, foresaw that there must be sooner or later a row between Chamberlain and the Birmingham fiscal school and the free-trade policy of the Treasury. He did not want to be a leading protagonist in this coming controversy. Goschen was too good a fellow and too true a friend to quarrel with, and we soon resumed our old cordial relations. He was then very blind and could not distinguish a face across a broad table. It is impossible for a civilian First Lord who is blind to be a thorough success, and this Goschen and his Naval Lords soon found. Still, his brain-power and courage enabled him to carry on, especially during the Boer War, his administrative duties with vigour, but his tenure of office was unassociated with any marked reform or development.

The Government thus formed lasted for ten years (1895-1905), although during that period certain resignations and changes in high office occurred. When it did terminate, great was its collapse and that of the party supporting it ; and in the seventeen years since its fall, the Unionist Party has never even partially recovered its previous authority. At first sight it would seem that this unprecedented débâcle of the party was due to dissension upon fiscal questions ; but there were other and latent influences at work whose operation must not be ignored.

The combination between Salisbury and Smith was a happy mixture of the most worthy influences of Toryism. Salisbury represented more effectively than any leader of the last half-century the best qualities of the governing aristocrat. He was

patriotic, self-denying, of exceptional industry and ability. Office to him was only an instrument for the promotion of his country's welfare. At any moment without a murmur or complaint he would have laid down the burden of authority. He thought and fought for his order, not to ensure to them privileges or exemptions, but because he believed that their maintenance did supply the best material for sound and reliable government. Although he lived mostly with his peers, there was nothing egotistical or arrogant in his personality; but he did not know or come sufficiently into contact with influences, movements and aspirations of classes other than his own. Smith admirably supplied this deficiency. A self-made man and the head of a gigantic publishing enterprise, he knew, felt and assimilated all that was best in the progressive movements of the day. His common sense and perception (amounting to genius) rarely, if ever, failed him in his diagnosis of the agitation of the moment. Although Salisbury and he never differed in public, many were the tussles behind the scenes over legislation and policy, and though they imposed a very heavy strain on Smith, he manfully stuck to his guns, and the years during which he and Salisbury were the leaders were more fruitful in useful legislation than any similar period of Tory ascendancy. Moreover, Smith gave time and attention to the wearisome and often sordid details of party organisation and management.

Arthur Balfour was neither by temperament nor inclination adapted to such work, and although he brought a most brilliant and incisive intellect to bear upon his duties, he lived too much in the same groove and was bred too much in the same school of ideas as his uncle to supply Smith's place as adviser and guide

in mundane political and popular work. He was bored to extinction with party details, and, though one of the most courageous men alive in an emergency, he had an innate antipathy to unpleasant interviews with colleagues and subordinates or to that part of the irksome work of leadership which can only be discharged by personal attention and application. His conduct of Irish affairs was by far the most brilliant piece of Parliamentary debate and administration in my generation, yet, curiously enough, the training of that terribly severe ordeal was a disqualification for some of his subsequent duties as Leader of the House of Commons. The Irish Nationalist papers were so abusive and inaccurate that he found it a waste of time to read them. He therefore slipped into the practice of declining to read any newspaper at all—a most impossible attitude for a House of Commons leader. His extraordinary quickness in debate and reply enabled him when Irish Secretary (for he was always on the defensive) to speak without preparation or a study of the subject under discussion, and this habit grew upon him with advancing years and increasing pressure on his time. His rare personal charm, his exquisite literary instincts, together with his exceptional intellectual gifts made him the dominant personality of the House of Commons, and that ascendancy he maintained; but in the country his influence did not increase, for his speeches on the platform were out of touch with what people were thinking and saying at the time he spoke.

This detachment increased and affected most of his intimates, until they drifted into something separate and apart from the rank and file of the party they were supposed to guide and indoctrinate.

Politics became a by-product, but not the dominant interest of their career ; but they are a very exacting mistress, and he who wishes to be pre-eminent in this sphere of work must not only subordinate all other pastimes to his political duties, but he must, in addition, so conduct himself as to impress upon his colleagues and followers a sense of genuine sincerity and belief in what he says and does ; otherwise, no matter how gifted he may be, he will court failure. Politics, like religion, are founded upon belief. If the germs of disbelief or distrust once creep into their fabric, its disintegrating influence very soon asserts itself, and this doubt contributed almost as much to the débâcle of the Unionist Party as fiscal differences.

During the earlier epoch of Salisbury's administration successful Egyptian and South African campaigns endowed it with a temporary popularity ; but when he retired, his successor had to face the accumulated effects of seven years of internal simmering and dissatisfaction. The working of the caucus system aggravated this discontent ; their selections were not infrequently determined more by wealth than ability, and thus opulent mediocrity had more than its fair share of the representation of the party.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE Secretary of State in Council, i.e. the India Office, for more than seventy years was the administrative influence by which an autocratic Government at the other end of the world was maintained controlling 300 millions of people, and yet during the whole of that period was constitutionally subordinate to a democratic House of Commons. Looking at the immense difficulty of giving India a just and progressive government and at the same time retaining and exercising the summary powers of action which all Eastern authorities must have in reserve, the constitution and composition of the Government of India, as established under the Act of 1858, have worked extraordinarily well, but they have worked well because the great bulk of the House of Commons has been reluctant to interfere with or upset the decisions or policy of the Indian Government unless there were imperative reasons for such interference. Indian questions have thus been kept outside the influence and movement of party politics. The powers of the Secretary of State and the Governor-General in Council are immense. Every Secretary of State soon learns that he must very closely watch over the exercise of this almost unlimited authority, so as to give no reasonable pretext for Parliamentary interference or reversal of its action. He has to use the well-known illustration of Sir Henry Maine—to keep accurate watch and

reckoning simultaneously in two spheres of longitude widely apart. To achieve this not always easy task, he should select the ablest available Anglo-Indian civilians as coadjutors both for himself and the Viceroy. Ability and experience rather than personal preference for easy-going colleagues should be the dominant qualification. I am afraid that of recent years this consideration has not been always adhered to, and a good deal of the trouble latterly in India and the demand for change has its root in the non-observance of this indisputable principle. Our Empire in India was founded and consolidated by a few able, daring and far-seeing statesmen, and it can only be retained by an exercise of the same qualities, which are inbred rather than the product of competitive examination. How to find or get them is becoming a more and more troublesome problem.

I held office as Secretary of State for India for over eight years—a record tenure—and during that time I was successful in steering India through a number of troubles, and in only one case was the action taken seriously contested in Parliament. This criticism, however, was largely based on preconceived party ideas and was in consequence easily defeated. The governing principle of the Act of 1858 is the absolute control of the Secretary of State in Council over expenditure from Indian revenues. He and his Council occupy a financial zareba which cannot be stormed even by a unanimous Government. The Secretary of State might be forced to resign under such conditions, but if his successor and Council stick to their original decision, they cannot be dispossessed. This principle has worked very well, and latterly financial sympathy for India is so strongly felt in the House of Commons that an objection has been

taken on more than one occasion to India's becoming, even with the assent of State in Council, a partner in the expenditure of expeditions which, though Imperial in name, were undertaken for India's protection and benefit.

Indian finance has been admirably managed. At the time the Crown succeeded to the heritage of the East India Company, India was almost bankrupt. She has now, even with the additional liabilities incurred by the Great War, the best balance-sheet of any country in the world. Her deadweight debt is almost negligible, and her remunerative assets in the shape of public works now almost equalise the outlay incurred in making them, and they are yearly increasing in value. If any practical refutation is required of the charge of selfishness and unfair exploitation by Great Britain of her subordinate territories, India's balance-sheet supplies that defence. British financial experience, courage and engineering capacity have been continuously at India's disposal. No tribute has been exacted, no preferential duties or customs have been imposed for her benefit. The benefits accruing from India's expanding trade and prosperity have been shared in common with the rest of the world. Whilst adjacent Eastern countries have become more and more submerged in unprofitable trade and indigence, India's credit, borrowing power and prosperity have steadily improved.

We are apt to ignore and dislike self-glorification, and at times we push this reluctance too far, for we seem to prefer to leave the most praiseworthy features of our best policy in oblivion rather than incur the charge of self-advertisement. The history of India's progress and development during the sixty years she was administered by the Crown and

Parliament of Great Britain is a record of unselfish, unostentatious and successful work such as few, if any, self-governing countries have to their credit. In these days of universal propaganda any nation is seriously handicapped which declines, whether from tradition or self-sufficiency, to sing the song of its own successes and achievements ; and whether we like it or not, we must for our reputation and safety make publicity for the future an organised factor and department of our Government.

The India Office, although a most important section of Imperial administration, is thus much less in contact with the House of Commons, so far as its daily work is concerned, than the other big departments of State, and its Chief, unless he prominently participates in general debate, gradually slips out of the public eye. With four such debaters as Balfour, Goschen, Chamberlain and Beach I certainly was not wanted in discussions outside my department. I was thus able to do what my soul delighted in, viz. concentrate all my attention upon my departmental work, with the pleasing knowledge that, provided I carried my Council and the Viceroy with me, I had a free hand for change, reform or improvement. Parliamentary Government, especially as regards its control over the executive, is at times a great nuisance and a shocking impediment to prompt and effective action. Provided there is no pressing or sensational question on the tapis, the House of Commons is disposed to leave a department in comparative peace to do its allotted job. But the moment a crisis occurs, then the department affected, which for the time being is working at the very highest tension, is bombarded with questions, interpellations and demands for returns which not in-

frequently absorb many hours of attention from the very officials who are best qualified to deal with the emergent subject. The amount of time wasted and the disorganisation caused by this incessant torrent of interrogation is well known to all experienced Parliamentarians. I assume that it is a necessary evil inseparable from Parliamentary control, but an evil it is, at times expanding into a danger.

It was pleasant to be made to give the whole of one's time and energy to a department which is free from Parliamentary tutelage ; but to a Minister so freed there is this drawback. He gets out of touch with the tone and trend of the public topics and movements of the day. He soon finds this out when platform-speaking outside his constituency. He does not give the necessary priority to the matter of the moment ; he has frequently to hunt about to get the tone of his audience, and whilst so engaged he not infrequently loses a hold over it which he cannot afterwards regain. Successful platform-speaking depends more on the arrangement of the speech than on its argument. Given the first, the speech should be a success. Failing that quality, its arguments, however good, will not effectually permeate the audience.

Joseph Chamberlain was an extraordinarily effective platform orator. In congratulating him upon a speech in the House of Commons where he had had to conduct a very questionable case over the thinnest of ice, I said, "The arrangement of your speech was admirable." He replied, "I am glad you think so. I always give more thought and time to the arrangement than to the argument of my speeches."

CHAPTER XXIX

My tenure of the post of Secretary of State for India lasted over eight years—a record—but it was uneventful so far as outward and visible appearances were concerned. Internally, however, in spite of plague and famine, the progress of India in wealth and prosperity and trade was steady and continuous. Indications of unpleasant trouble, racial and religious, manifested themselves during the later part of this period, but to these I will refer presently.

It was seventeen years since I had left the India Office, and in the interval all my old colleagues and associates had disappeared. I came into contact with an entirely new set of councillors and officials. The Council had some very distinguished men upon it, notably Field-Marshal Sir Donald Stewart, Sir Alfred Lyall and Sir James Peile, but its average was not up to the level of the Council of 1874, and during my eight years of office it further retrograded. The two Viceroy's with whom I had to deal were Lord Elgin and Lord Curzon—a curious contrast, though the former was much under-estimated from his dislike of publicity and notoriety.

Every Secretary of State is almost certain, if he is in office for more than five years, to have on his hands either a famine in some part of India or war-like disturbances on some section of the long frontier line. The so-called famines in India are not so much a food as a wage scarcity. The rainfall and

climate of India so vary that never has there been an absolute insufficiency of food in the continent of India for all the people within it, but the difficulty has been one of distribution and transport, and in every succeeding decade, as our railway and irrigation systems develop, so do the consequences of local shortage become more limited and counteracted.

But famine and war in one sense are preventible. From the time of Joseph up to now the evil consequences of the former have been averted or palliated by foresight and prescient administration. War in the same sense can not infrequently be obviated by an attitude of firmness and conciliation. Under our party system, where fault-finding with those in office is the main object of the large proportion of the Opposition, the mere fact of there being a local famine or a frontier disturbance at once furnishes material for spiteful and unfair criticism. In the event of a shortage of food it is so easy to imply that the Secretary of State has been indifferent or callous to the warnings and signals of impending distress, and the test usually imposed upon his alertness and earnestness is not the amount or success of the work he is superintending, but the form and frequency of his appeals to the public for private subscriptions. When a duty is undertaken by a public authority, and it has at its disposal sufficient resources and machinery for dealing with the existing evil, it is exceptionally difficult to make such an appeal to the public as will ensure a good response without admitting that the Government is neglecting one of its elementary duties. To obtain any large sum from the public necessitates a vivid and pathetic account of the sufferings of the afflicted districts; but it provokes at once the rejoinder: "Why are you so

neglecting the work that it is your duty to undertake by trying to transfer to the shoulders of the public the task which belongs to you ? ” If you do appeal to the public to help you, you do so because you are incompetent. If you do not appeal, you are heartless and insensible. Such is the usual and varying form of criticism and attack made upon those in authority when dealing with famine.

We endeavoured, knowing what was in store for us, while perfecting the arrangements formerly employed for the distribution of the food, to limit these arrangements to the provision of the necessities of life and to appeal to the public to supplement our relief by comforts both of food and clothing. It is not difficult to keep to this line of division, but from the limitations it suggests you can never get anything like the sum obtainable if our arrangements had been so faulty as to cause heavy loss of life and health.

I was unfortunate enough to have a succession of famines to deal with, and although I am tolerably pachydermatous, the unjust criticism and abuse to which Lord Elgin and I were subjected in connection with famine administration arouses within me even to this day a vibrant indignation. There was the less justification for this misrepresentation as, when the relief operations were concluded and reviewed, it was generally admitted that they had been exceptionally effective and successful.

In the same way a war on the Indian frontier, especially if it attains large dimensions, affords another opportunity for party attack and misrepresentation. There is a large section of the public who is taught to believe that if we on our side of the frontier will leave alone those on the other side, they will

reciprocate such an action by leaving us alone. For many years past there has been a controversy between a forward policy and one of inactivity on our front, and the adherents of the latter policy used to assert that the adoption of their views would ensure permanent peace and tranquillity all over our front. There is no greater delusion. Where tribes have for many centuries been accustomed to raid and loot one another, the very fact that wealth and prosperity are being accumulated beyond their borders is an additional inducement to them to attack the district so prospering, especially if it is unable to defend itself. Force and easy communications are essential if peace is to be preserved.

Shortly before the resignation of Lord Rosebery's Government the Indian authorities were obliged to send up a small mission to re-establish order in the distant and petty State of Chitral, a little principality situated in the extreme north-east section of our frontier. Chitral is a tributary of Kashmir and consequently within our political sphere of influence. It is sandwiched in between two high sections of the Afghan and Russian frontier, and it was believed to be of great strategical importance as a good jumping-off ground for expeditions and invasions of the countries over which it towers. The capital of the State was only sixty miles on our side of the Russian frontier. One of the objects of this mission was to settle conflicting claims to the chieftaincy through the late Mehtar (as he was called) having been assassinated by his brother, who then took his place. This small force clambered up the difficult but only available road in our territory leading to Chitral. This road was very steep and circuitous and was dreaded by all who had to traverse it. The natural route to

Chitral was by Peshawar and then for a short distance through the lands of the Nawal of Dir and of the Swati tribes. A portion of this territory was outside our acknowledged frontier. On their arrival in Chitral our mission was suddenly and treacherously attacked and, in spite of a friendly chief, was there beleaguered. They made a spirited defence against great odds, and Major Townshend (subsequently of Kut fame) was in command. A large expedition had therefore to be sent up for their relief, which was easily effected. Prior to the despatch of this latter force the assent of the tribes was obtained to the construction of a road between Peshawar and Chitral, and a proclamation was issued by the Viceroy to the tribes assuring them that if they assented to the construction of the road they would in no sense be subsequently interfered with. This understanding having been effected, the expedition without difficulty reached Chitral and relieved their besieged countrymen. The question then arose, what was to be done with Chitral? To abandon it meant the massacre there of all who had befriended us and made almost impossible the fulfilment of the obligations we had undertaken both with Russia and the Ameer of Afghanistan as regards the tranquillity of this part of our acknowledged sphere of influence. To hold it necessitated keeping open the road recently made. The Indian Government unanimously recommended that the latter course should be adopted, and the Radical Government at home were pondering over this (to them) unpleasant proposition when they vacated office, having settled nothing except to say "no" to the only practical scheme before them.

I thus found myself, as soon as I got inside the India Office, up to the neck in the old partisan

frontier controversy which had raged with such acrimony during the later years of Disraeli's Government.

Certain members of the Indian Council who in the past days had been opponents of the forward school were antagonistic to the Indian Government's proposals, and I was at first sight inclined to side with them; but on consulting Lansdowne, who had just come back from India, he convinced me that the risk consequent on the evacuation, and the insurmountable difficulties it would create in the enforcement of the frontier conventions we had just made, were so grave that the wisest and cheapest course was to accept the Indian Government's suggestion. This we did. The road, partially made by our predecessors, was widened and improved with the assent of the tribes through whose territory it passed, and a small native force was left at Chitral, we having negotiated a satisfactory settlement as regards the sitting Chief of Chitral. Though the course thus adopted by the Indian Government was the subject of cavil and criticism in certain parliamentary circles, no serious objection was taken to what was obviously the least risky and unsatisfactory policy open to us.

During the recess I read up and studied the voluminous papers and despatches relating to the policy pursued along our frontier since I was last at the India Office. In the Midlothian campaign the frontier policy of Beaconsfield's Government stood only second in infamy to his European arrangements. Here again the course of events had been too strong for our Pharisaical critics. There was scarcely a principle in the maligned policy of Lord Lytton that Gladstone and his Government had not been subsequently compelled to rehabilitate and enforce. Lord

Northbrook, when Viceroy of India, was not allowed to give the Ameer of Afghanistan a limited guarantee of protection against foreign aggression. A short time afterwards a practically unconditional assurance and a large subsidy were spontaneously given to the new Ameer by the very men who had summarily put on one side the suppliant request of his predecessor. A subsequent convention with the Ameer made us responsible for the behaviour of tribes outside our legal frontier, and this arrangement, known as the “ Durand Agreement,” coupled with the frontier delimitations accepted by Russia, placed upon the Government of India the responsibilities and obligations for the good behaviour of the whole of the inhabitants up to the accepted Afghan and Russian frontier line. This again was a flagrant violation of the policy of the “ Masterly Inactivity School,” whose dictum had been an uncompromising refusal of any responsibility for the good conduct of those outside our administrative frontier.

But worse was to follow. Waziristan, a large and unhealthy tract of country outside the old frontier of India, was a hotbed of dacoits, raiding parties and organised thieving. A large expedition was sent against the Waziris in 1893-4, and when it had successfully concluded its operations on behalf of the Radical Government, Sir Henry Fowler overruled a minority of the Government of India in their protest against the establishment of permanent garrisons in these outlandish localities. Sanction was then given to the location of these forces outside the administrative frontier. This forward action upset the very foundations of the whole fabric of Radical non-intervention. So little attention was given by the Radical Party to their frontier policy

in India that neither leaders nor followers were aware of what they had done when in office or of the topsy-turvy changes effected in the principles they had previously proclaimed from the housetop. As soon as they were out of office they began to weave their myths over frontier questions, and to speak as if the last decade had been an epoch of stagnant and successful conformity with their old shibboleths. An opportunity was soon given them to show their partisanship. In the autumn of 1897 a tribal outbreak of Waziris rapidly developed into a most serious frontier war. It ran right up from Waziristan to Chakdara, a cantonment somewhere beyond Peshawar, and guarding the bridgehead of the road leading to Chitral. It spread and spread, the Afridis joined it, and the Government of India had to mobilise some 70,000 men to stamp it out. This was effectually done in the course of the next two months. It was indisputable that this outbreak originated not where we had made the road, but where our predecessors had placed garrisons ; but what did this matter ? An ignorant and presumptuous Secretary of State had departed from the tactics of masterly inactivity : see the consequences in a big and avoidable war. The country must revert to the sound doctrines of Gladstone's Government, and a vote of want of confidence must be moved as soon as Parliament met. The Opposition were discredited by their recent crushing electoral defeat. They had no effective ammunition for party meetings, so they seized upon the opportunity given by these tribal outbreaks, and their leaders, Harcourt, Morley, Asquith and Reid (late Attorney-General), were at once in full cry. Meetings were organised all over the country, and all the party paraphernalia was put

in motion preparatory to a formal parliamentary indictment.

During this commotion the Government, including myself, remained quiescent, but with the knowledge of my colleagues I was preparing a Blue Book so edited as to make it self-evident to anyone who even skimmed its contents that the successive acts of our predecessors involved wholesale repudiation of their previous and present declarations of policy. The more ignorant they were of its contents, the more damning became their own self-condemnation. I further associated with this Blue Book a long despatch laying down for the future guidance of our policy on the frontier a series of principles which time and recent experience had proved to be essential to the peace of the districts concerned and by removing distrust would secure the co-operation of our neighbours.

So soon as our opponents had irretrievably committed themselves by giving formal declaration to the terms of their vote of censure, I circulated this Blue Book, the publication of which I had purposely kept back. Though the book contained the terms of peace accepted by the tribes after their outbreak, there was not a word of complaint about the road which it was alleged was the primary and sole cause of the recent outbreak.

The Radicals were very angry at being made to look and feel such fools ; they asserted it was not fair of me to keep back this Blue Book, that I ought to have made known its contents and thus prevented them from committing themselves as they had done on the platform. They could not withdraw the motion they had made, but to argue it with their past offences thus recorded against them was impossible. They therefore put up a clever lawyer to lead

the attack. He made a thoroughly "nisi prius" oration, based on what was done twenty years ago and omitting all notice of events and obligations during the past fifteen years. In the debate it was the Opposition and not we who were in the dock, and after a most one-sided debate we obtained a majority of over a hundred.

Good, however, accrued from this partisan fiasco. Never since has the frontier policy of India been criticised from preconceived party purviews. The difficulties to be there faced were recognised as indigenous and permanent and not capable of settlement by the diatribes and declamation of platform politicians.

The campaign along this long range of hostile country and against born marksmen and skirmishers placed a searching test upon the quality of the troops there engaged. Young soldiers trained in the plains were of little use in this mountainous warfare, and one or two unpleasant setbacks occurred. By far the most formidable of our assailants was that curious congregation of individuals known as the Afridis. To what race they belong or from where they come has always been a puzzle to the historical student. They vary much in physique, in colour and demeanour. Their one common attribute is the nursing of implacable family feuds. The fiercest of Corsican vendettas pales before the undying animosity of these family quarrels. Adjacent houses are fortified and protected one against another to a point of inconvenience which is almost inconceivable when these barricades are not temporary but are in existence all day and every day. When on British soil this feud is supposed to be suspended, but this is not always the case. Lord Mayo, in the prime of his

vicerealty, was murdered by an Afridi convict in the Andaman Islands. This man had been an orderly to a high military authority at Peshawar. He was exemplary in his conduct, and he took under his special protection the young children of his General. Unfortunately a member of the family with whom he was at feud crossed over into our territory. This was too much, so he was stalked and killed just within our boundaries. If he had been killed outside that limit, no punishment would have ensued ; but the act being within, his assailant was tried and condemned for murder and transported to the Andamans. This rough mountaineer could not understand the niceties of territorial jurisdiction. He had faithfully fulfilled every obligation he had contracted with the British Sirdar, and been more than once specially decorated ; yet because he fulfilled a family obligation on British territory he was branded as a murderer and punished, whereas if he had performed the act a little farther off no notice would have been taken of it. He nursed this hostility against the agents of the Government which he believed had broken faith with him, and unfortunately Lord Mayo, in his personal disregard for danger, being unprotected whilst getting into his boat, fell a victim to a murderous assault with a knife.

The Afridi country was geographically the most difficult and its inhabitants were the most intractable of the whole frontier range. The Valley of Tirah was a by-word. Entrance into it or departure from it necessitated alike military precautions of the most exact nature. The General in command of the Punjab troops was the well-known soldier Sir William Lockhart. He was regarded as a unique expert in all frontier warfare. His presence on

the scene of action was calculated to be worth a division, so great were the awe and confidence he inspired respectively into foe and friend. At this moment he was unwell and at home on leave, intending to go through a course of Nauheim for heart trouble. The Indian Government, as soon as they thought it probable that the Afridis were coming out, were anxious that the expedition against them, which would be of considerable dimensions, should be under his personal control. I saw him at the India Office just before he was leaving for Germany, and I told him the latest news from the frontier, where fighting on a considerable scale had already begun. I did not like to press upon him the duty which, if it cut into the middle of his cure, would very likely endanger not only his health but also his life. I shall not easily forget his answer to my suggestion: "If I am wanted and you will let me know by telegraph, I will undertake to be at the port of embarkation within twenty-four hours of the receipt of your message." The Afridis came out, the telegram went, and, true to his word, he and an aide-de-camp who was with him were on board the ship designated to take him within the twenty-four hours. He left his cure to take care of itself.

The campaign, though short, was arduous, and Lockhart's masterly dispositions completely baffled the enemy. He got into the Valley of Tirah with comparatively little loss of life, and the Afridis at once sued for peace. It is characteristic of the love that the Eastern fighting races have for a strong man that after the terms of peace were settled at a personal conference with an Afridi Jirgah, they lifted him up and carried him as a conqueror in triumph back to his house. The Sikhs, two detachments of

whom had been killed to a man in advanced forts, received him with like jubilation at Umballa, wishing to give a warm welcome to the great sahib who had given the Sikhs an occasion of showing how they could adhere to their vow of allegiance !

But the campaign killed Lockhart, who never recovered his health, and when shortly afterwards he became Commander-in-Chief in India he was a broken man with but a short period of life before him. I have more than once since then thought over the incident and wondered whether I was right in letting him know when his health was so indifferent that he was wanted on active service on the Indian frontier. He was a very valuable man. He was the third great Indian soldier with whom during my tenure of office I had the honour of working. Sir Donald Stewart, Lord Roberts and Sir William Lockhart form a trio whom in any day or under any conditions it would have been hard to match. Each was admirable with his own distinctive attributes, and yet personally they were so unlike one another. Donald Stewart was equally efficient in diplomatic and financial work as he was in his military operations. His march to Kabul from Kandahar was a masterpiece of carefully-thought-out plans, and his unselfish transfer to Roberts of the best elements of his armies in order that the younger general might march back and relieve Kandahar is a rare example of military self-denial and patriotic prescience.

Roberts's charm of manner, utter absence of self-assertion except on the battlefield, his daring, his inherent strategical instincts and his intense anxiety to promote the moral and material status of the Army made him beloved by all who knew him.

Lockhart's brain-power and determination, associ-

ated with an exceptional literary ability, put him quite on a level with his two great predecessors. If he had lived and retained his full health, he would have been invaluable in working out reforms which the Indian Army much needed. When Lockhart died, I spent several hours, assisted by the Permanent and Military Secretaries, at the India Office in going through the higher grades of the Indian Army, to see if we could find anyone coming on of the same calibre as these three great soldiers, and we searched in vain. This enquiry took place nearly twenty years back, and our conclusions have, I think, been endorsed by what has since occurred. The Indian regimental officer is still excellent, but there is a distinct deterioration in the grades above regimental commands. Military training in England has greatly improved; the ambitious officer no longer seeks efficiency in the Indian Army. The fluctuations in the exchange value of the rupee have disturbed the old monetary advantages resulting from Indian allowance, and in addition to these considerations there is the all-important fact that Indian military men under the present system of promotion are seldom put into positions of responsibility until they are about fifty or older. It is the general experience of those who have watched long periods of work in tropical climates that Europeans at or after fifty begin to show diminished vitality and energy.

It was my painful duty as Chairman of a Commission to enquire into the failure of the campaign in Mesopotamia in 1915-16, and I think that every one of the Commissioners felt that something had gone wrong with a noble Service and that one of the first duties of our military authorities was to attempt the resuscitation of its popularity and efficiency.

CHAPTER XXX

IN the beginning of the year 1897 India was startled by a double murder of a novel and sinister character. Two British officers were assassinated in their carriage on their return from a big official reception at the house of the Governor of Bombay. At first it was assumed that this murder was incidental rather than political, but investigation clearly showed that it was the work of an organised murder-gang. Various other outrages, some resulting in death and others in mutilation, were perpetrated within a certain area of the original crime. In all cases they were directed against officials or known friends of the British Raj. One of the murdered officials, Mr. Rand, was a very capable and well-known officer in charge of plague operations, but his associate, Lieutenant Ayres, was a medical officer, and it was believed that he was mistaken for another officer on plague duty. The audacity of the assassination perpetrated on a high-road along which a string of carriages was running carrying back the guests from the Government reception and the selection of the occasion of a great official function for the murder marked it as no ordinary outrage. For months past certain extreme native newspapers circulated amongst the Mahratta population had employed the most violent language against the attempts to stamp out plague and the officers engaged in the task. The articles in question were simply incentives to assassination, and the

nature of the examination of individuals in localities where plague was rampant was deliberately falsified. Although official action in certain cases had been taken, it was too spasmodic in its operation and the epidemic of misrepresentation too wholesale and repeated to be effectively counteracted by a limited use of Press control.

I am sorry to add that these falsehoods found their way into the House of Commons. Questions were put to me by reputed representatives of extreme native parties, and although I was able to show there was no truth in their allegations, the charges were repeated and circulated by those sections of the Radical Press which were working with the members in question. The most hurtful of these allegations was the statement that soldiers attached to the search parties used to strip women in the streets. This is the class of insinuation and allegation which maddens alike the orthodox Hindu and Mussulman. There was not a word of truth in these statements. The Government had given the strictest instructions that no woman was in any circumstances to be examined in public, and when examined under cover the examination was always conducted by specially trained women.

It was my business as Secretary of State to look through the translations of the native press, and I was horrified to find that any statement of the kind alluded to when once made in the House of Commons was circulated a thousandfold throughout India. I have very little doubt that the tone and language of certain English newspapers and of the members of Parliament with whom they were in liaison have been a contributing cause to the murder of British officers in India : not that the editors of such news-

papers had any idea of the terrible impression their articles made upon fanatics at the other end of the world; they were only concerned to damage the Government to which they were politically opposed, and they did not adjust their methods of attack to the atmosphere in which they soon became acclimatised.

After two years of patient investigation into the late agitation this murder-gang was broken up and its members either transported or hanged. When the documents relating to this particular trial came home, I found amongst them the confession and autobiography of the leader of the gang, written whilst in prison and under sentence of death. It was the saddest and most depressing story I have ever perused.

Sivaji was the great leader of the Mahrattas against the Moguls, and he carried on his operations with such success and ferocity that he contrived, with a limited number of wild horsemen and hill-fighters, to break up the apparently solid structure of the Empire. Amongst his other performances was the murder, at an arranged interview, of his chief Mohammedan opponent. The murder was effected during a friendly embrace by a stab through the kidneys with a specially-made knife.

Sivaji's name and worship had come very much to the front in the Deccan during the last thirty years. He was treated not only as a hero but as a demi-divinity, and the assassination to which I have alluded was eulogised as a patriotic act. It was during this agitation that this murder-gang came into existence. It was called "A Society for the Removal of Obstacles to the Hindu Religion," but consisted of about a dozen young men, almost boys,

all belonging to good Mahratta Brahmin families, and most, if not all, had been through advanced British schools. They had neither individually nor collectively any personal grievance against the British. Rand was unknown to them by sight or action, and the writer of the autobiography said that since he had been in prison he had heard nothing but what was to his credit.

Macaulay, the founder of the literary system of European education in India, predicted in one of his writings that in course of time his educational system would eliminate heathenism; and yet here we find a literary system of European education, when engrafted upon Asiatic mentality and fanaticism, so upsetting the mental balance of some of its recipients as to make them the ruthless and senseless perpetrators of outrage and murder. Curzon Wylie, a political officer, beloved by the majority of his native associates and subordinates, was murdered at a reception held in the Imperial Institute of London for no sane reason. His murderer had a European education, and the instigation of this and other atrocities emanated from an Oxford graduate. Now what, under such conditions, should be done? Are we to stop this form of education? No, we cannot have recourse to such reaction, which would invalidate our claim to the government of India; but if we continue our present methods of education, we must take cognisance of an indisputable fact which underlies and at times thwarts our best efforts for India's amelioration. There is a fixed gulf between European and Asiatic mentalities which will always remain. Many natives express themselves in the English language with great fluency and ease. Do the words they use mean to us what they

mean to them? Do they intend the propositions which they make to work out in the sense and manner which to an Englishman is self-evident and indisputable? During the time that I was at the India Office I saw many distinguished natives. They were, as a rule, very capable men, but with few exceptions I found that in talking to them we somehow or other failed to gauge fully each other's thoughts and intentions. This feeling was not due to subtlety or disingenuousness. It was inherent in the mental remoteness one from another of the talkers.

We are about to embark on a tremendous administrative change in India. It is called a diarchy, and as its designation implies it consists of two different administrative elements, one being British and the other Indian, running parallel one to another. Ask any Englishman—for instance, the present Secretary of State—how this diarchy is to work, what give-and-take will there be between British and Indian officialdom? Then take the ablest native you can find and ask him to give his definition of its future. I am certain that there would be irreconcilable difference between the two. "Take," and not "give," is and must be the native's ambition. "Give" must be that of the position in which the European is put. The old order is passing away under the attrition of the aftermath of the war. The change will be very great in India, and we are about to destroy the most glorious administrative machine the world has ever seen. Over 300 millions of natives were governed by 200,000 white people, and that small number included women, children and white soldiers. Yet for over sixty years this handful of Englishmen, assisted by many thousands

of native officials whom they trained, has conducted India along a path of continuous progress, development and prosperity until India as a national entity ranks high amongst the first kingdoms of the world.

I spent most of my official life in this Government, and I always felt that the more we elevated the status of prosperity and the standard of efficient government in India under the "Pax Britannica," the stronger would be the demand for self-government. It is a demand to which, if India were in any sense homogeneous, there would be but one reply ; but India is not homogeneous. It is a motley aggregation of races, nationalities, religions and traditions such as cannot be found within any one dominion elsewhere in the world. Whilst racial aspirations and antagonisms cluster around pedigrees of past glory and dominance, those of religion are mainly divided between the pretensions of Mahommedans and the practice and traditions of Hinduism ; but this division is, again, subject to many clefts and ramifications.

From time immemorial India has been governed by minorities, small in proportion compared with those they dominated, but they governed by the sword. The idea of government through the majority is wholly contrary to the instinct and traditions of Indian psychology. The conflict for supremacy has never been between a great dormant majority and an active minority, but between dominant minorities located in different parts of India. The struggle for predominance between these warring minorities converted India during the whole of the eighteenth century into a cockpit of internecine warfare, and British authority was compelled to step in and terminate the wholesale ruin which was

culminating throughout India. Minorities must rule in India, but what minority? This in the past has been the crux. At one time it was the Aryan, then the Mogul, at another period the Mahratta; but never have government and authority been based on the counting of noses. There is scarcely a big native State in India in which the governing races form the majority. It is now proposed to substitute the tongue for the sword as the organ through which the struggle for predominance of racial and religious difference is to be controlled and fixed. Self-determination—the American ex-President's remedy for the adjustment of differences between rival races and religions within given areas—has, wherever it has been since applied either in Europe or Asia, produced disturbance and insurrection. Why should its progeny be different in India? The problems in India are so complex and explosive that I should not like to imply blame upon those promoting schemes for their elucidation even when I distrusted their insight into and grip of the subjects with which they profess to deal; but they do not seem to have thought out where they are going, and what, unless human aspirations entirely change, must be the certain end of the policy they are advocating. It may be that, in their judgment, it is necessary to promote a plan in which British authority will be so gradually whittled down as to cease to be a potent factor in Indian government. If so, ought not we to have been told that such was the intention of the change? But an insidious and underhand method of obtaining this result forms the background of the new scheme. In the past and until quite recently England has achieved her incredible administrative success by giving to India the best of her manhood in the shape

of civilians, soldiers and lawyers. It is they who have made India. In recent years the falling-off in ability and aptitude of these services has been marked and is, I believe, a main cause of the existing commotion. Under the diarchical system the deterioration must be greater and cumulative. The class of Englishman who made India will not go into a system in which they will be subordinate to those whom their predecessors governed. In numbers, ability and tradition the declension will be great, and with this declension British authority must gradually evanesce until it dies from inanition—and what then ?

India is permeated throughout with deeply ingrained elements of unrest and disaffection, ostensibly quiescent but simmering and ready on any incitement to spring into active and dangerous being. Their origin and inspiration are multifarious—predatory turbulence, racial animosity, religious fanaticism. No prescience can anticipate the kind of outbreak that, without warning, may suddenly flame out.

The prestige of British authority, with absolute control over all civil and military force, has been the antidote and deterrent to these deposits of maleficent disorder. The forces at its disposal may be small, but behind them was the belief in the invincibility of the British Raj. What native authority or combination of authority can make good the disappearance of this prestige ? Yet it is the prestige and not the little armed force behind it that has given to India internal peace, order and progress.

The Queen's Diamond Jubilee was celebrated in the middle of the year 1897 with great pomp. The ceremony differed in the form it took from that of

its precursor in 1887. There was no great inter-mural religious service attended by the crowned heads of Europe, such as had been held at Westminster Abbey in 1887, but a procession representing the many nationalities, races and territories within the British Empire meandered for many miles through the leading streets of the Metropolis. The Queen-Empress was in the centre of this wonderful display, and in her progress through the city she stopped for some time in the square in front of St. Paul's Cathedral, where she was presented with a religious address by the Archbishops and clergy of the Established and other Churches. This blending of Great Britain and the Antipodes and of the East with the West was extraordinarily effective, and gave to all who saw it some conception of the variety, the vastness and the cohesion of the British Empire. The Indian contingent eclipsed all others in the gorgeousness of its costumes and equipment. Foremost amongst this delegation was that splendid veteran soldier Sir Pertab Singh, a Rajput Chief of unblemished record and unimpeachable ancestry. He was a superb rider, and never before had such an opportunity been given before an unlimited European crowd for the display of the consummate horsemanship of the East. Mounted on a big and thoroughbred charger, from the moment the procession started till it came to an end—a period of over three hours—prominent in the centre of the cortège was Sir Pertab Singh on his curvetting, prancing, caracoling charger. To the delight of the huge crowd, this performance never ceased till the procession dispersed, and whilst the European riders looked tired and listless and somewhat bored by their lengthy peregrination through narrow streets, our

Rajput Chief never flagged or allowed a symptom of fatigue to escape from him.

Owing to King Edward's serious illness on the eve of his coronation, there was no similar display in 1902 ; but the fact of his being so ill brought indelibly home to me (I was Secretary of State for India at the time) the great ineradicable power of the monarchical principle. The delegation from India was large, varied and thoroughly representative. One and all took the King-Emperor's illness as that of an intimate relative. It was impossible to get them to take an interest in anything else so long as his condition was critical. When he was slowly recovering, the one idea of those members of the delegation who had been conveyed from India to England at the Government's expense was to be allowed to remain till they could themselves see the face of the *de facto* descendant of the " Great Mogul." A large deputation of native officers came to me at the India Office. They had a request of supreme importance to make, and, in accordance with Eastern custom, each placed his sword at my feet. They then presented their petition. It was to the effect that they must personally see their King-Emperor, that their faces would be eternally blackened if they did not before their return to India discharge this sacred duty. If expense was an obstacle, they offered to give up all their extra allowances and "batta." The Sikhs' representative, a priest of eminence, absolutely declined to go, and said that, though poor, he would beg his way back to India rather than not see the King.

It is well in these cold northern latitudes, where government is assumed by some to be secure if based on logic and common sense, that we should

realise the deep devotion and indestructible traditions that entwine themselves around the monarchical legend in warmer and more impressionable latitudes.

During the Great War we were supposed to be fighting for democracy against autocracy, and we won ; but democracy, though nominally supreme, is not at present sitting very comfortably or firmly in the seats of the dispossessed authorities. Autocracy and monarchy failed, and deserved punishment because their possessors either grossly abused their temporary authority or declined to use it for the protection of the State or for their poorer subjects against systematic corruption and extortion. I am convinced that the monarchical principle will return, and with reasonable restrictions against its misuse will again permeate Asia and Central Europe. Let us, then, in our attempts to give new constitutions to countries and dominions both within and without the British Empire, not forget or ignore the immense hold which a personal and visible discharge of authority has upon the world at large, and not shape our course regardless of this irrepressible predilection.

CHAPTER XXXI

FOR some time previous to the formation of Lord Salisbury's Government of 1895 there had been simmering discontent amongst the Uitlanders in the Transvaal against the Government of Pretoria. The discovery of the almost inexhaustible gold-fields of Johannesburg had brought from all parts of the world the adventurous and disreputable elements of civilisation into the territory of the Boer. It would be difficult to exaggerate the fundamental differences in the outlook and objects of life between those which animated the dour "Dopper" authorities in Pretoria and the rowdy, rollicking, go-ahead proclivities of the miner populations under their control; but the former owed their affluence and strength mainly to the exertions of the latter, and yet the latter were denied all share in the government they so sustained. Putting on one side a natural preference for the virile though bigoted temperament of the Boers as against the cosmopolitan Semitism of Johannesburg, the dispute between the two admitted of but one solution—a fair share in the control of the Government the burden of which they bore. Amongst the more sensible and civilised of the Boers this view widely prevailed; but the governing clique at Pretoria was composed of the narrowest sectarians, and it became religious obsession on their part to refuse all concessions to subjects with a religious and racial pedigree antagonistic to their own.

Towards the end of 1895 a surprising rumour

converting itself into truth reached us in London of a raid upon Johannesburg by a small column of improvised cavalry. This column started from Mafeking, then a small village just within British jurisdiction. The news was so astounding that at first it was not believed; but when it became supported by indisputable evidence, then astonishment and bewilderment succeeded incredulity. We were at profound peace with the Transvaal Government. The fighting power of the Boers, both personal and collective, was well known; yet here was a tiny force of three or four hundred hastily-recruited men jumping off on an expedition the first objective of which must be the capture and retention of the huge, straggling community of Johannesburg. The insane audacity of the movement and the utter inadequacy of preparation and numbers for the objects in view gave a certain glamour to the enterprise which misled even sensible politicians, and for a day or two the raiders were the darling of a certain section of our Press. But the ignominious failure of the attempt and the utter ineptitude shown by those in charge of it soon brought home to all the folly and iniquity of this scandalous violation of international law. Chamberlain at once took control of the tangle, and, thanks to his firmness and Kruger's clemency, a settlement was arrived at both as regards compensation and punishment of the offenders. In my judgment, the punishment inflicted upon the officers concerned was quite insufficient. They should have been simultaneously cashiered. As it was, most of them, after their temporary punishment, crept back into the Army. The Transvaal Government might, according to international law, have shot the whole of them. I felt strongly on the inadequacy

of the punishment. In India there were constant discoveries of the intrigues of Russian emissaries along our frontiers. Sometimes the allegations were exaggerated, sometimes untrue, sometimes true; but if an armed expedition, headed by officers of the Emperor of Russia's Household Troops, had invaded British territory, we should have insisted upon a severe military penalty. These light sentences and the approval shown in certain social circles of the offenders did us [as a nation and Government] incalculable harm. It was another illustration of "Albion's perfidy," and the prejudice and hostility shown towards us by the world at large when, later on, we were obliged to accept Kruger's challenge can be traced to a legitimate resentment against not merely the outrageous nature of the offence, but the highly inadequate sentences inflicted upon the promoters.

A certain mystery even to this day hangs over the inception and execution of the raid. It was clear that Chamberlain had nothing to do with it—it was not the kind of transaction he would have touched; and if he had been a party to it, he would certainly have taken care that it did not collapse from ineptitude and the want of push and organisation. A large section of the Radical Party, without producing a particle of evidence in support of their contention, even after the enquiry was over, did associate Chamberlain with the raid, and I was privately told by a very high authority that the main cause of Harcourt's retirement from the leadership of the Radical Party was his refusal to associate himself with such an accusation.

Cecil Rhodes's complicity in this conspiracy was proved and admitted by him. It was *the* blunder in the career of one of the biggest men of the last half-

century. A masterful patience and volcanic impulse were his two great attributes. By their alternate exercise he swept on one side the almost insurmountable impediments to the fusion of race and territory in South Africa, and just as he was in sight of the completion of his far-seeing policy, he gave way to the impulse of primitive man and—to use his own homely expression—"upset the apple-cart."

He was not fifty years old when he died. He started as one of the large family of a poor clergyman, without money, health or influence behind him. In less than thirty years, unaided, by his personal work alone, he amassed a gigantic fortune in two great industries which he had himself largely created. He spent his wealth and the influence it gave him in the promulgation of a vast Imperial policy—a policy which, though checked by the untoward circumstances of the raid, now holds the field right throughout the huge Continent of Africa. Napoleonic indeed were his methods and ideals, but they did not totter or collapse at his death, as did those of his great prototype. They have since prospered and expanded. It would be difficult to find in the history of the world a more rapid and successful creator of Empire than Cecil Rhodes.

Reverting to this indefensible raid from Mafeking, not only did it arouse moral indignation against the British Government, but it led at once to the arming and organisation of the whole Boer male population as a national military force. In the past such military equipment was limited to purposes of self-defence against the turbulent elements of the coloured population; now it was directed against Great Britain. Artillery field-guns ranging up to 6-inch calibre were imported in large

numbers, and drilling, training and staff organisation went on *pari passu* with this wholesale importation of munitions of war. The British Government was perfectly aware of what this meant and to what it must lead, but their powers of protest were nullified by the imbecile appeal to force made by the raiders. All that we could do was to increase our garrisons in Natal and Cape Colony, but we had to do this circumspectly and in moderation. As the Boers became better organised, so did the pressure increase upon the Government at Pretoria to take the initiative, and foremost in promoting this propaganda was Germany, acting both through official and unofficial agents. The breach widened more and more between Pretoria and London. Kruger was a shrewd and capable ruler, half a fighter and half a devotee, but always keeping an eye on the main chance, whatever that might be at the moment.

Majuba Hill and the astonishing defeat which we there sustained was a contributing factor to the disruption of the negotiations commenced in 1898. The Boer regarded with contempt the race that had placidly accepted this previous defeat. In the propaganda circulated by Dutch and German emissaries grotesque stories were told and pictures invented of terrified British recruits being dragged off in chains by gigantic Boers, and—ridiculous as it may now seem—Kruger's entourage really thought that Great Britain could not bring a force adequate to overcome their militia.

Ultimately Kruger made a false move in declaring war upon us. If he had sat tight and made us take the initiative, I very much doubt if we should have secured a warm, hearty majority here for the prosecution of the war.

The story of the war, our early failures and losses, the successful combination of Roberts and Kitchener later on, have been too often described to need recapitulation ; but as one in the thick of the preparations and arrangements made I must try to clear away one general misapprehension.

It has been assumed in certain quarters that our early failures were due to the politicians miscalculating the fighting power of the Boers, and upon this miscalculation they proceeded to cut down the preparations which the military authorities put forward. This is quite incorrect. It was the soldiers, rather than the civilian politicians, who underestimated the task before them. The war resolved itself into one gigantic skirmish, and at this particular form of fighting the Boer was a special adept. No Regulars trained in the most approved barrack-square drill could equal as skirmishers farmers each on his own pony, accustomed to prolonged exercise in the open air, born shots and familiar with every nook and cranny of the enormous veldt and sparsely inhabited country. Moreover, they contrived to move guns (then considered to be of heavy calibre) with a facility and speed which amazed the orthodox artilleryman. There was no military demand of substance made by the War Office upon the Government which was refused except one, viz. a request from Lord Wolseley to mobilise the reserves during negotiations. If this had been done, from a military point of view our preparations would have been more complete, and we should have had a large force at our disposal at the declaration of war ; but the moral and political effect of a great nation deliberately massing its forces prior to pacific negotiations with two little States would have been disastrous. As it was, it was only

the acknowledged predominance of our Fleet over any combination of foreign navies that saved us from a forcible intervention by the big neutral Powers, and mobilisation during the negotiations would probably have resulted in a practically unanimous international protest against such dragooning tactics.

Amongst the soldiers I never heard a doubt as to the adequacy of the preparations proposed by Lord Wolseley (then Commander-in-Chief). Sir Redvers Buller visited the Queen at Balmoral previous to taking over the chief command in South Africa. Almost his last words at Balmoral to his friends were to the effect that by the time he arrived at Cape Town he feared the fighting would be over. I had an even more confident expression of opinion from Lord Wolseley. As soon as there seemed to be a reasonable likelihood of fighting in South Africa, I suggested to my colleagues that as all the British military establishments in India were on a war footing and as South Africa was so much nearer to Bombay than the English Channel, it would be advisable to send a large contingent from India if the Indian Government could spare it. Wolseley objected, but my colleagues overruled him; and Curzon (then Viceroy of India), with his characteristic thoroughness, threw himself into the idea, and a large force in India was secretly earmarked for this purpose and the necessary transport taken up.

In the early autumn of 1899 I was at Deal, and one morning I received a bundle of papers from the India Office. Amongst them was a packet from the War Office, and at the top of this packet was a minute written by Sir Beauchamp Duff (then Assistant Private Secretary to Lord Wolseley) to the effect that he was instructed by him to say that in the

eventuality of hostilities with the Transvaal, no assistance would be required from the Indian establishment, and that they should be so informed by telegraph.

The situation was daily becoming more menacing, and if, as seemed certain, hostilities did commence, Indian reinforcements could be placed in South Africa in about half the time required for troops coming from England. I declined to send the telegram. I communicated with Lansdowne (then Minister for War), who, for the moment, was in Ireland, and who thoroughly agreed with me and desired that the expectant attitude of the Indian Government should be fully maintained. Within a few days of the above incident war broke out, and the Indian contingent was only just in time to prevent the whole of Natal from falling into the hands of the invading Boers.

Wolseley's refusal to avail himself of India's proper military assistance can only have been based upon supreme confidence in the adequacy of his own preparations.

About six weeks later I sat next to Wolseley at dinner. There were rumours then afloat in official circles that he was suffering from loss of memory, which, though intermittent, was during its spasms thorough and complete. As I wanted to get to the subject of the Indian contingent, I said by way of opening up the conversation, "You have a secretary called Duff?" "No, I have not," he replied. "Yes," I reiterated—"Beauchamp Duff, who was appointed by the India Office." "No, no; you are quite mistaken. I never had any secretary of that name." I saw it was hopeless to persevere, and I realised for the first time how terribly handicapped Lansdowne

was by the partial paralysis of his colleague. Since then others have told me that he could write quite a good minute, go home, and so forget all about it as to deny next day that he ever wrote it. At one moment he was his old self, at another half dormant.

I had known Wolseley for many years, and he had always been very kind and considerate to all his young officers, of whom for some years I was one. He had exceptional abilities, industry and resource, and he fought with rare courage and success and almost single-handed the cause of modern ideas and their introduction into our army system. Against great odds he contrived to lay the foundation of a reorganised and improved Army. Early in life he had been more than once severely wounded with great loss of blood. It was truly tragic that this man, who had by his courage and ability fought his way up to the very top of his profession, should in the military crisis of his life, when his exceptional experience and services were specially required by his country, have been partially incapacitated by such a defect.

A Commission over which Elgin presided was appointed to enquire into the conduct of the war. I wanted to give evidence before it, in order that the public might know what Lansdowne's real difficulties had been, as a dead set had been made against him by a group of military men and journalists. Lansdowne, with his usual nobility of instinct, preferred the risk of misrepresentation rather than aggravate the controversy by counter-charges. I think that he was wrong, but I naturally accepted his decision.

After the war was over, Lord Wolseley did make a speech in the House of Lords in which he intimated

that if he had only had greater powers the progress and finish of the war would have been very different from what they had been. Lord Lansdowne, in a very judicious reply, stated that he thought the main cause of our non-success at the beginning was not the lack of powers of the Commander-in-Chief, but the fitful exercise of those powers—a very kindly and considerate method of expressing the loss of memory from which Lord Wolseley suffered. But the Press was practically unanimous in condemning Lord Lansdowne for trying to save his reputation at the expense of a distinguished soldier. So is history sometimes written.

Whilst South Africa gave us a black week of reverses in December 1899, on the other hand British arms in mid-Africa achieved a final victory over their old enemy the Khalifa, who was killed and his army destroyed in the same month. We glory in the size, power and ubiquity of our Empire, but it is a very exacting mistress in the never-ceasing toll that it exacts of the best of our adolescent manhood.

CHAPTER XXXII

RESUMING my chronological summary of important political events, I have to recall the death of Gladstone in 1898. He had long been ailing, and since his retirement from the premiership in 1894 he had taken no part in political current affairs. Of all the activities of life there is none that seems to me to evoke after death so little gratitude or recollection from the living as that of politics. It is the practice, when a death is first known, to pay highflown formal compliments both in Parliament and the Press to the memory of the distinguished man who has gone; but in a very short time his work is forgotten and he becomes a by-product of antiquity. His partisan utility is gone; his personal attraction is no longer there; the close of his life is probably associated more with failure than success; and unless he has founded a special school of thought or policy, his career and exploits are rapidly buried in oblivion. In my own recollection, man after man of distinction has disappeared and his place in national history has almost simultaneously disappeared with him; and yet many of them gave the best part of their lives, energy and thought to an unselfish service devoted to the benefit of their country.

Gladstone for sixty years had been in the forefront of Imperial politics, and the greater part of that time had been spent in high office. He had been four times Prime Minister, and during his

lifetime was apparently surrounded by a popularity and adulation rarely if ever before attained in this country. His devotion to the work he undertook, his unshakable belief in its national efficiency, his untiring energy and exceptional intellectual attainments, coupled with a high moral standard of conduct, should have secured to him for many years to come unmistakable marks of popular adoration. Yet the crowd at his funeral at Westminster was so thin and meagre that even in the short route between the House of Lords and the Abbey it was not ten deep.

When I looked at this tiny crowd and contrasted it with the life and achievements of the great man whose funeral they were attending, there came home to me the profound truth of the Preacher's description of life: "Vanity of vanities; all is vanity."

In this year the quiet, capable Pro-consul Lord Elgin was replaced as Viceroy of India by the ardent and indefatigable personality of Lord Curzon. No man since the days of Dalhousie was better qualified by his antecedents, aptitude and aspirations to occupy this Imperial post, and great were the expectations of his friends and admirers. He did much good work and carried out reforms and improvements in almost every branch of Indian polity; but his work was somewhat overshadowed and effaced by the circumstances of his retirement, the result of a personal difference with Lord Kitchener, Commander-in-Chief. His work was so ubiquitous and detailed that I cannot attempt to give even a short synopsis of what he did; but the mention of some of his bigger performances gives an idea of his irrepressible energy, for though much

of what he did was the joint conception of himself and the Secretary of State, to him must be given the credit of translating ideas into acts. He laid down new and general principles for the guidance of our frontier policy which have since worked so well that little, if any, alteration has been made in them. He gave effect to the long-expressed wish of those trading in or with India for the introduction of a gold standard. He remodelled the whole system of education and the rules regulating furlough and temporary appointment—both very irksome and tedious tasks. Finding that the Central European Powers were about to undermine the vast sugar-cane industry of India by an insidious application of the beet-sugar bounty system, he put on counter-vailing duties to counteract this idea. So successful was this beginning of retaliation against bounty-fed sugar that it shook the whole fabric of this artificially supported industry. I have nothing but praise for the results of these and equally beneficent changes; but I must add that the methods by which they were carried through aggravated the standing evil of the Supreme Government's system of over-centralisation.

Curzon took upon his shoulders responsibility for the whole administration of India. It was a task too heavy even for him and quite beyond the capacity of those who succeeded him. This centrality of authority, especially when exercised from Simla—a hill-top only just outside the borders of Nepal—is the cause of much of the recent agitation for provincial home rule. Curiously enough, whilst in civil matters he was an exponent of centralisation, he sent in his resignation as Viceroy because he had sense enough to foresee that a similar centralisation

in military affairs could only result during wartime in inefficiency and failure. The story of his retirement is such a curious illustration of the zig-zag and irreconcilable conclusions upon the same subject at which, under our party system, the same government may be forced to arrive, that it is worth restating at length.

In 1902 Lord Kitchener went out to India as Commander-in-Chief. He had behind him the prestige of his successful campaigns in the Sudan and the credit of bringing the desultory Boer fighting in South Africa to a negotiable conclusion. All throughout these operations he had been practically single-handed and omnipotent so far as organisation was concerned. This single-handedness became to him an obsession. He could not, and he would not, delegate. All went well with his reputation as an organiser so long as the subjects to be managed were not beyond the grasp of one man.

In 1900 the Indian system of military administration was far superior to that of the British War Office, where the Commander-in-Chief was nominally supreme over all military matters, both executive and administrative. This is an impossible combination for one man. The first class of questions with which he has to deal, viz. executive, are urgent and constant; they cannot be temporarily put on one side. But if they are thus dealt with, the official who handles them cannot give to the other class of questions, viz. reforms and administrative developments, the time and detachment necessary for their consideration. No efficiency in the fighting force can fully counteract defective organisation, transport and supplies. This was at last recognised, at home, and the old administrative functions of

the Commander-in-Chief were divided amongst a War Office Council, each member being responsible for a definite sphere of administrative work. This great military change was made by Balfour's Government just about the time Kitchener was appointed to India, and in carrying it through, inconsiderate—not to say rough—treatment was applied to the dispossessed officials at the War Office.

The first intimation Roberts, when Commander-in-Chief, had of his dismissal was contained in a note laid upon his writing-table. He was naturally much annoyed at such treatment. King Edward insisted upon an apology being subsequently made to him which to some extent soothed his feelings. The Adjutant and Quartermaster-General, the Head of the Intelligence Department and the Surveyor of the Ordnance were all similarly treated. General Nicholson (afterwards a Peer and Field-Marshal) was Head of the Intelligence Department. I had had a great deal to do with him in the past, and I always found him an absolutely first-rate official. Arnold Forster was then Secretary of State for War. I said to him one day in the lobby of the House of Commons, "Whatever may be your reasons for changing the executive officers, why did you get rid of so competent a Head of the Intelligence as Nicholson?" "Oh," replied Arnold Forster, "he has got an appointment he prefers, and he is quite ready to leave the War Office." Meeting Nicholson a few days afterwards, I repeated to him the purport of this conversation. He flushed up crimson with anger, and said, "Whoever told you that is a ——— liar, and I hope you will tell him so when you meet him. My dismissal was thus noted to me. General Grierson was an official

in my department, and under me. I found him in my room looking very uncomfortable. I said, 'What is it? What can I do for you, Grierson?' 'Don't you know?' he replied. 'I have just received notice that I am to succeed you.' "

The extraordinary lack of consideration thus shown to a group of our most distinguished generals gave very great offence to the Army and was much talked over in semi-official circles; but I have never been able to ascertain from whom these guillotine orders emanated. Certainly not from Balfour, the Prime Minister, nor do I think that Arnold Forster, the Secretary of State for War, instigated them. If these assumptions are correct, what authority was there behind them? The only intelligent explanation I can think of was that these dismissals were the work of a small Committee composed of Lord Esher, Admiral Sir John Fisher and General Sir George Clarke, who were appointed by the Cabinet to report upon the system of administration in force at the War Office and to make suggestions for its improvement. They wrote a report, putting forward very drastic changes. This report was sent to the King before the Cabinet saw it and was initialled by him, and I believe all these changes were effected either directly or indirectly by the Committee or by some member of the Committee. At any rate, by an extraordinary exercise of authority the Home Government summarily abolished the post of Commander-in-Chief in Great Britain, and distributed his functions amongst a number of officials on the ground that it was impossible for any one man to discharge all the duties associated with that high office.

Now, in India a different system prevailed. Two officials, and not one, were responsible for the

management of military affairs. First, the Military Member of Council, who dealt with general questions of policy and administrative changes and improvements. He was a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council. Then came the Commander-in-Chief, upon whom rested the responsibility for the fighting efficiency of the whole of the military establishments. This system, in force since the Indian Mutiny, had proved very efficient, so much so that ambitious young officers looked to India rather than to Whitehall for the most modern, up-to-date military training. Though no rule was made as to which of these two high officials had authority over the other, the system had worked well on a give-and-take principle, and both Lord Roberts and Sir Donald Stewart, two successful soldiers of exceptional experience, appreciated and fell into this system of divided work.

A few days before Lord Kitchener left to take up the post of Commander-in-Chief in India, he called upon me at Deal Castle. In conversation he said quite casually, "What are the functions and status of the Military Member of Council in India?" I described them as shortly as I could, and he then said, "I ought to be Military Member." I did not attach much importance to this remark, but the news reached me that almost immediately upon his arrival in India he fell foul of General Elles, who was then Military Member. It should, however, be added that the two preceding Commanders-in-Chief, Generals Lockhart and Palmer—the one through illness and the other from lack of administrative experience—had not sufficiently asserted their authority, and the Military Member in consequence had obtained a larger share in the military administration of India than had his predecessors.

Kitchener, however, resented all interference or restraint, and he deliberately set to work to make the position of the Military Member untenable. His object was not a judicious division of duties which it was beyond the ability of any one man to discharge, but to abolish all duality of control and to centre the combined powers in his own hands. In other words, he proposed to set up in the most compressed and exaggerated form that very system of army management which the British Government had summarily abolished in Great Britain the year before as unworkable. Balfour, the Prime Minister, was at that moment in troublous waters owing to the resignation of certain of his colleagues, and to the dismissal of Roberts and other leading soldiers, which was bitterly resented by the Army.

The conflict between Curzon and Kitchener became so hot and personal that it was clear that, whatever decision might be arrived at in the dispute, one or the other would go. Balfour was not prepared to face Kitchener's resignation, so to retain his services the Cabinet forced on India that very system of administration they had abolished in Great Britain as inefficient and ineffective. The weight of administrative authority, both past and present, was strongly against the change, but it was engineered through with some skill at the very end of the life of the existing Parliament. It was never discussed in either House, nor by the Council of India. It was sent out from this country as a mandate of the British Government.

Curzon very properly resigned, but he had his revenge when the new system collapsed under the stress of war, producing a series of military catastrophes in Mesopotamia. There was no part of the

Report of the Commission which was published in 1917 upon military operations in Mesopotamia which was more scathing in its censure than that relating to the utterly unworkable system started by Kitchener and developed by less capable successors. To give an illustration of its futility and waste of time, one has only to mention two facts. Neither the Commander-in-Chief nor any one of the Headquarters Staff had time for even one personal visit to Bombay, still less to Mesopotamia; yet Bombay was the place of embarkation for all supplies and personnel for the first two years of the Expedition and the port at which something like 60,000 sick and wounded men were subsequently landed. When the Commander-in-Chief came before the Commission as a witness, he produced in triumph a library of forty Blue Books, all beautifully written, annotated and dated by his staff on the hill-top at Simla, enumerating the different services and wants of the Expedition, both in Bombay and Mesopotamia. As a record they were perfect, but it was a grave record of literary industry and military ineptitude.

I first came across Kitchener when he was in command of the Suakim garrison. He was then a most engaging and interesting soldier. By instinct he was a born fighter—I might almost say a fire-eater—and in a daring sortie from Suakim he was badly wounded. From that day he, by force of will, metamorphosed his character as a military man, and he subordinated his fighting impetuosity to method, preparation and calculation. It was these qualities that brought him success in his great enterprises. He was in addition an admirable negotiator, forcible and conciliatory as the occasion required. His handling of Colonel Marchand at Fashoda was masterly and

evoked from Salisbury unstinted praise. He was equally successful in his relations with the Boers, but on no occasion did he exhibit this diplomatic aptitude so thoroughly as in his controversy with Curzon. By propaganda he so manipulated public opinion and the Press that Curzon's case was almost unknown and certainly not seriously studied, though it had behind it a phalanx of the best military and administrative opinion.

Kitchener's name and fame will be inseparably associated with the critical phases of the Great War. His general knowledge of European politics and the part he had taken in them in the past gave him in France a personal influence which no other English soldier had. His intense sense of duty, his hatred of self-advertisement and his iron self-control obtained from the people a spontaneous confidence far beyond that reposed in any other public man of the day. He may have made mistakes, but they were the product of an over-anxious patriot, not of a self-seeking notoriety. Upon his shoulders during this period fell a terrible burden of responsibility and decision, and his name will for ever be gratefully remembered as the incarnation of a stoical soldier and patriot.

The dissolution of Parliament was announced on September 18th, 1900. Though the war in South Africa still continued its desultory course, the Boers were beaten, and it was only a question of time as to when they would so acknowledge their defeat as to accept its reasonable application. As might have been expected with victory behind us, we scored a great polling triumph. Our opponents were disheartened and disunited, for Rosebery, Fowler, Asquith and Grey took a broad and patriotic view

of the situation. The Radicals attempted to bolster up their platform by the manufacture of false and libellous charges of misbehaviour and atrocity against our troops. Their war literature was a scandal, and the Chairman of the Committee disseminating these aspersions was a well-known writer who subsequently became a Cabinet Minister. Fair play and fair dealing are supposed to be British characteristics. How comes it to pass that in almost every national crisis that occurs a certain political group becomes reckless and unrestrained in their denunciation of their own countrymen? Is it wanton malignity or a hopeless inability to distinguish between facts and what Disraeli described as "the harebrained chatter of irresponsible frivolity"? Whatever may be the cause, the evil seems ineradicably engrained in the psychology of a certain political faction; and though it generally fails in the attainment of its immediate object, it gives colour to the Continental conviction that we are a perfidious race pursuing, under the plea of humanity and civilisation, a policy of brutality and rapacity. The Government majority was practically unimpaired by this election, and another five years of dominant authority seemed assured to the Unionist Party.

A few weeks after the electoral returns were complete, I went to Balmoral as Minister in attendance upon Her Majesty. Upon my arrival I found the Court in great perturbation and distress. The news had just arrived from South Africa of the death of Prince Christian Victor of Schleswig-Holstein, the eldest son of Princess Christian. He was a fine fellow, a *persona grata* to all who knew him, and in addition to considerable natural aptitude he possessed a considerate disposition which always prompted

him to do kind and just things in the manner agreeable to the persons affected—a valuable combination in an ordinary mortal, but invaluable in Royalty, where the opportunities for kindly notice are so much greater than those occurring in less exalted spheres of movement. He was a special favourite of the Queen, who, knowing his exceptional qualities, freely used him as an intermediary in the many trivialities and frictions which always environ a great Court.

Her Majesty was so upset at the news that she sent me a message to say that she could not see me for some days to come. When the interview did take place, I was shocked to note the marked declension in her vitality which the events of the past few months had made. There were unmistakable symptoms of an impending physical breakdown, and it was the only time in the course of my many interviews with her that there was any departure from the iron self-control which she always displayed to her Ministers. She felt acutely, not so much the isolation of her unique position, as the deprivation through death and old age of the services both of relatives and Ministers who could advise and help her in her increasing disabilities. The dual task of supervising the affairs of her ever-increasing Empire and of managing the details of her Court and entourage were getting beyond her waning strength, and she knew it. She pathetically described to me how the younger and less occupied members of the Royal Family, such as the Duke of Albany, Prince Henry of Battenberg and Prince Christian Victor, were useful to her, and how they had all been taken from her and that there was no one to fill their places. The table was covered with red boxes, and many more were in the ante-

room outside. I left her presence filled with a deep feeling of loyalty and admiration for the courage and self-sacrifice which this lion-hearted little lady showed in her determination, so long as there was breath in her body, to meet the exacting calls of her incessant duties ; but associated with this sentiment was the sorrowful reflection that for a Sovereign so circumstanced there could be neither peace nor rest save in the grave.

When, two months later, a bulletin from Osborne announced that she was ill, I knew it was the end, and on January 22nd, 1901, this grand life came to a close.

The passing of the Great Queen to her last resting-place was, as pre-ordained by herself, full of dignity and simplicity. In the ship allotted to the House of Commons party, which was in the centre of the long line of ships, all wore an air of solemn expectation. A grey, still day in January, no sun, and not a breath of wind. Presently the sound of guns from the Isle of Wight announced that the procession had started, and as each ship took up the booming toll it was just possible to hear the notes of Chopin's Funeral March played by successive ships' bands. Nearer and nearer came the sorrowful procession. Then appeared some destroyers, so painted as to look even blacker than usual, steaming at an unnaturally slow pace. After them came the *Alberta*, with Admiral Fullerton rigid and immovable at the bow. At last the little ship with its precious burden came in sight—a white bier in the middle of the deck, and at each corner the figure of an Admiral standing absolutely motionless. Just as she passed, the sun, setting over the Isle of Wight, sent out one brilliant ray like a searchlight and illuminated the catafalque as if sending it on its

mournful way. And so passed the Queen for the last time over the sea she loved so well.

The sense of a well-earned rest after a protracted period of rare responsibility and authority was beautifully conveyed to all present by this simple but most impressive pageant. Those only of the generation to which I belong, associated with and permeated, as it was, by the individuality of Queen Victoria, can understand the national gap caused by her death. It was the longest reign in the annals of the monarchy of this country, and its length was only equalled by the astounding development and progress made during that epoch in every branch of national life and well-being. With every such advance the Queen's name was personally associated. Courage, constancy, truth and high principle were the cult and ideals of her life, and the knowledge that she was so guided was the secret of the immense and ubiquitous personal influence she exercised over her people. These high qualities were associated with an exceptionally practical aptitude and discernment of character—a rare combination of governing qualities, winning for her in the history of the world a unique reputation as a successful ruler and guide.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE new King at once responded to the ordeal imposed upon him. On the first day of his reign he exhibited an ability, foresight, tact and consideration that never failed him during the remainder of his life. He had to make more than one speech on this memorable day without time either for preparation or for thought. The ceremonial ordeal was very long and exacting. As an illustration of his wonderful memory and tact I may allude to one incident personally affecting myself.

Those of his old friends who had been intimate with him and were in his Ministry wrote respectfully to congratulate him upon his accession to the Throne. He could only have received these with hundreds of other letters on the morning of his nomination by the Privy Council. Each Minister took an oath of allegiance before him. Whilst so engaged, the King took the opportunity of individually thanking in a whisper those who had so written to him, and so self-possessed was he and so thorough was his memory that even during this trying ceremony he did not forget a single one of his correspondents amongst the hundreds swearing allegiance to him.

In the interval between the Queen's death and the Coronation festivities of 1902, although little apparent change from the old régime was evinced, a good deal of unnoticed transition from the established traditions of the past reign was gradually

effected in these twelve months. New ideas, new groups, both political and social, were germinated. The older men and the ideas they had adopted and in which they had been trained began to take a back seat in public opinion ; but Lord Salisbury's Government continued for the time being almost unchanged, the only notable displacement being that of Goschen, who, upon attaining the age of seventy, retired from the House of Commons and his post of First Lord of the Admiralty. He then took his seat in the House of Lords.

Sixty-five years intervened between the coronation of King Edward and Queen Victoria, and in that period the British Empire had taken a new shape. It no longer consisted of two little islands, of scattered and unconnected Colonial outposts outside, regulated and treated more as the crew of a man-of-war than as self-governing and responsible entities. The external British Empire had grown out of all previous recognition, and in the area of territory and population, exclusive of the Continent of India, it outclassed States of antiquity and pretension. Liberal and responsible self-government had long been enjoyed by the larger of these communities, and from all these oversea territories responsible Ministers flocked to participate in the homage and ceremonial allegiance of the coronation of the Lord Paramount of this agglomeration of States.

The Coronation, attended as it was by notable representatives of all these Oversea Dominions, was an eye-opener to the more advanced Radicals, some of whom in the past had given a somewhat free eulogy to Republican organisation and ideas without realising what their application under present conditions meant. They seemed to think that every-

thing would go on much the same as before, except that an elected or nominated president would take the place of the present hereditary monarch and be the occupant of Buckingham Palace and the fountain of authority, and that, though the veneer of our institutions would be altered, the kernel and fabric it covered would, for all practical purposes, be unchanged and as adaptable and as efficient in dealing with old troubles and new problems as the previous system. They found, however, that the glamour and reverence surrounding our Throne were political and substantial assets carrying with them an influence and accepted jurisdiction which no Republican substitute could either achieve or maintain. No President, periodically selected to be the figurehead of Great Britain, could permanently command the allegiance of our great Oversea Dominions, still less that of our Indian Empire. A republic at home means the disintegration of the British Empire abroad. Sovereignty is not a mere emblem, but is the incarnation of the Imperial idea. Disturb or abolish the British monarchy, and you destroy not the summit but the whole foundation of the fabric of which it is the top. The more our statesmen came into consultation and conference with the elected representatives of our Oversea Dominions, the more was this truism impressed on all who took part in such deliberations. Deep as were the regard and reverence shown to the Throne as the binding link and inspiring influence of our Empire by those taking part in the ceremony of King Edward VII's coronation, these feelings were intensified and strengthened by the coronation ten years later of King George V.

In the last eighty years Great Britain has, under the

monarchical system, had the benefit of three successive rulers, differing from one another in their temperament, but each equally efficient in popularising the monarchical principles. In times alike of national emergency or of halcyon prosperity the monarchical principle is equally potent, equally adaptable and effective. Whilst other Empires under the ordeal of the last few years have collapsed almost beyond resuscitation, the British Empire is stronger and more solidified and united than before. Can anyone doubt that the monarchical principle, exemplified as it has been by three such great guides and leaders as Queen Victoria, King Edward VII and King George V, has been the consolidating and unifying cement of this unique edifice?

This year saw the spun-out conclusion of the South African War brought to an end. It had lasted two and a half years. Seldom has any conflict of the same duration and dimensions terminated with less bad feeling between the two warring protagonists. Both sides realised that the war was a mistake and ought to have been avoided. Both Briton and Boer felt for one another a respect and regard non-existent before the war, and upon this foundation a very generous settlement was made, for which the major credit must be given to the Radical Government of 1906 and which has since worked astoundingly well.

So soon as peace was established, Salisbury gave up the Premiership. He had been in failing health for some time past, and it was well known that he only waited for peace to lay down the burden that so overtaxed his waning strength. The disappearance of this dominant and majestic figure from political life caused a disturbance and rupture of ties and ideas

which only began to be felt in subsequent years. The mantle of Disraeli had naturally fallen upon his shoulders, and for over twenty years with consummate skill and patience he carried on the prescient views of his former chief. During this time his task was facilitated by Gladstone's sudden adoption of the Home Rule policy for Ireland, as the more stable elements of Liberalism naturally gravitated towards a statesman whose temperament and action precluded the possibility of a similar somersault on other critical questions.

If the outward policy and internal machine of Toryism worked smoothly and progressively during this long period it was mainly due to Salisbury's devoted and unbroken absorption in the responsibilities he had undertaken. His power of work, his minute observation of what was going on, his industry and, above all, his unrivalled power of saying and writing much in few words were gifts which he did not selfishly monopolise for the use of his department or office alone. They were freely at the disposal of his colleagues. He was always accessible and responsive, and his amazing receptivity and concentration of purpose made an interview of a few minutes with him the equivalent of hours with lesser men. I was personally and officially connected with him for nearly thirty years, and I cannot over-state the kindness and confidence he showed towards me during that time. The tongue might at times be sharp, but the heart was pure gold. He was one of the two great men to whom I largely owed whatever successful promotion I achieved in politics. When Disraeli died, Salisbury and Northcote both united in carrying on his policy. The policy was perpetuated, though its founder was gone ; but Salisbury's resig-

nation, synchronising as it did with other movements, broke irretrievably the link with the past. This was very soon evident. Goschen had gone two years before. Michael Beach went this year, and Devonshire might at any moment go. The abstraction of these four—Goschen, Salisbury, Beach and Devonshire—from the Cabinet took the ballast out of the ship, and when a vessel loses its trim it may drift anywhere. This quickly manifested itself by the vagaries proposed in our educational and fiscal policy. The first changes propagated the second. If we had had no Education Bill of 1902 we should have had no Tariff Reform in 1903.

The death of Lady Salisbury, who predeceased her husband by two years, was a political incident of great importance. She was a remarkable woman, capable, clever, courageous and dedicating herself heart and soul to the furtherance of her husband's views. They were a most devoted couple, and domestic life at Hatfield was on a higher plane than in any other large family with which I was acquainted. She was a very witty woman and was one of the few persons who dumbfounded Lord Derby (the Rupert of debate) by a repartee. The Derby Cabinet of 1866-7 was composed of sixteen members, three of whom—Salisbury (Cranborne as he then was), Carnarvon and General Peel—resigned on a difference with their colleagues as to the principles to be included in the proposed Reform Bill. Cranborne explained on a Monday in the House of Commons that he and his wife had spent Sunday in analysing Disraeli's figures, which they found unreliable. A reconciliation dinner was given by Derby to the Cranbornes, and Derby, who was an inveterate tease, opened his chaff by the remark : " So I hear, Lady

Cranborne, you devote your Sundays to arithmetic.”
“ Yes,” she promptly replied, “ and we did a very odd sum : we deducted three from sixteen, and we found nothing left.”

As the hostess of a great party in London and as *châtelaine* of her magnificent house at Hatfield her cheerfulness, conversational powers and sense of humour were unfailing, and though she had a sharp vocabulary, her kindness and generosity to her guests were unceasing, whilst the courage and dexterity with which she faced every trouble, either social or political, won for her general admiration.

The removal of two such friends as she and her husband had, both to my wife and myself, made life generally drearier, and politics for the future became rather a penance than a pleasure.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE freeing of elementary education from the payment of fees by the parents had been in operation for more than a decade and had worked unevenly. The arrangement then made was to pay from the Exchequer to every school a fee of threepence per week on the average attendance. Under the Education Act of 1870 fees could be paid by the parents up to ninepence a week ; but the statistical analysis made of school fees previous to their remission showed that throughout the country they averaged per child threepence a week, and this was accepted by and paid to the schools as their compensation for the abolition of the old payment by the parents. In the richer manufacturing districts the schools with high fees even up to the maximum of ninepence were popular with certain of the wage-earning class. They were a guarantee against the admission of the poorer and less healthy children into the school, and the high fee plus the education grant gave the managers the financial resources necessary to attract exceptional teachers. In fact, they were the best schools in their respective districts ; but the reduction of the fee from ninepence a week to threepence put them in financial difficulties.

Some of these schools were in Arthur Balfour's Parliamentary division. Whether or not this was the primary cause of his action I cannot say, but at any rate Balfour determined by a new Bill to alter the relative status of voluntary and board-schools

and put them upon the rates. No doubt a good many of the voluntary schools were in financial difficulties and required some kind of additional support, but several of my colleagues, including the most experienced, doubted—so far as primary education was concerned—the wisdom of or necessity for these new proposals, and the provisions relating to denominational schools were abhorrent to the whole left wing of Nonconformists. Its introduction was certain to disintegrate the Liberal-Unionist organisation and thus disturb the effective working of the existing alliance between them and the Conservatives.

Balfour was pertinacious, and by the display of determined leadership carried this Bill in the teeth of violent Nonconformist opposition. This put Chamberlain in a position of some perplexity. He had in the past been the governing spirit of opposition to all denominational schools, but with his usual courage and assurance he made out a justifiable case for his change of opinion. He then left for South Africa, where his presence was urgently required. Throughout this period he behaved with great constancy and loyalty and thus placed Arthur Balfour under serious obligation to him for the attitude he assumed during the whole of this controversy.

Before Chamberlain left he raised an informal and brief discussion upon our fiscal system, and he assumed—and I am sure with good faith—that the majority of his colleagues were inclined to his views. He returned a few days before the Budget of 1903-4 officially came before the Government for discussion, Ritchie being Chancellor of the Exchequer.

In the meantime the rupture anticipated between

the denominational and Nonconformist sections of the Liberal-Unionist Party had taken place, and Chamberlain had to face the consequences of his colleague's educational venture. I believe that his subsequent course of action was inspired quite as much by an attempt to resuscitate his political influence as to transform our fiscal system.

Two proposals for a reduction of taxation were before the Government—one relating to the income tax, upon which there was no difference of opinion, and the other to the tea duties. At the last moment Ritchie abandoned the reduction of the tea duties and announced the proposed abolition of the shilling duty upon corn. In favour of this change he quoted a memorandum from the Chief Whip urging, on behalf of many of our best supporters, the repeal of a tax which was very unpopular and politically awkward to defend. Subsequently it transpired that the real reason for this proposed abolition was Chamberlain's objection to its being retained unless associated with Preference. The suggested abolition of this tax at once raised a fiscal controversy in which the Prime Minister and Chamberlain both took part. The latter laid down publicly a general policy of Preference and the taxation of food which he advocated as essential to Imperial unity and development. A subsequent discussion took place in the House of Commons in which the Prime Minister endeavoured to explain away Chamberlain's utterances. The speech was adroit and would have passed muster if it had stood alone; but Chamberlain intervened subsequently in the debate, and his intervention gave quite a different complexion to the Prime Minister's speech from that which it assumed when left to itself.

The House adjourned for the Whitsuntide holidays, and during the recess the Prime Minister received from his colleagues, including myself, strong protests against the language and action of Chamberlain. There was a general demand that if the Government was to continue in its entirety it should be publicly stated that Chamberlain spoke only for himself. At a subsequent meeting the question was discussed, and Chamberlain found himself in such a minority that he had serious thoughts of resigning. From this step he was dissuaded by the Prime Minister.

On the second reading of the Finance Bill the Chancellor of the Exchequer gave expression to unequivocal Free Trade sentiments, but he also expressed his willingness to agree to an enquiry into the working of our fiscal system. It became obvious to the public that there was a serious difference of opinion in the Cabinet upon a question of vital importance. In the Cabinet itself the following compromise was arrived at—first, that material should be collected, collated and published upon the working of our fiscal system to enable the Government collectively to arrive at definite conclusions ; and secondly, that for the remainder of the session no member of the Government should either by speech or by writing publicly deal with this subject unless compelled to do so by Parliamentary notice. Chamberlain, however, stated that he intended to circulate pamphlets and leaflets through a Birmingham organisation upon certain aspects of the question. A nominal truce was thus established, so far as public meetings or speeches were concerned ; but, on the other hand, Chamberlain at once set to work to create a great organisation. Leaflets were distributed by the million, the Press (at least the great bulk of the

Unionist papers) were captured, and a wholesale system of canvassing and lobbying in the House of Commons was established, and the local caucuses were indoctrinated by every conceivable method with the new faith and policy.

These pamphlets caused great annoyance to a large section of the Cabinet and of the Unionist Party, and although they seemed to infringe the idea of a truce, not an effort was made by the Prime Minister to stop them. A few days before the close of the session two documents were circulated to the Government—one a White Paper entitled "Insular Free Trade," and another on blue paper proposing a scheme by which through Preference and Retaliation our existing tariff system was to be modified and changed. Both these documents came up for discussion by the Cabinet on the last day of the session. During this period of the so-called truce a considerable change had taken place in the personal opinions of the Cabinet. The Prime Minister had been talked round by Chamberlain; but the Blue Paper was a still more conspicuous instance of the Prime Minister's conversion. Anyone who read it would see at once that though it placed limitations upon the operation of Preference and Retaliatory Duties, it accepted the principles of both. To the contents of this paper four members of the Cabinet (of whom I was one) objected strongly and persistently, and certainly, in my judgment, they had far the best of the argument. The Cabinet was then adjourned.

On September 14th the Cabinet met again. In the meantime two elections had occurred, and in each case the Chamberlain candidate was defeated, and the reports of the election agents were unfavourable to the taxation of food.

The Cabinet was unable to agree upon a common definition of their fiscal views, and resignations, including my own, followed. This is now ancient history, but in case anyone interested in the controversy should care to gauge the nature and scope of our disagreement he can refer to the speech I made to my constituents at Ealing on October 22nd, 1903, explaining my reasons for declining to associate myself with the new fiscal adventure. The arguments and facts of my speech still, I think, hold good, and my prophecy of party disaster has been realised to the very letter.

Quite independent of fiscal questions there was a duality in our leadership which foreboded failure. Different as they were in their characteristics, Balfour and Chamberlain each possessed to a pre-eminent degree certain qualities of political leaders. Balfour's philosophical temperament and indifference to attack and exceptional powers of dialectical explanation made him a master of original and tenacious defence. Chamberlain's impulsive and imperious temperament, disregard of detail and convention and rare powers of aggressive speech made him the born leader of political forlorn hopes; but coupled together as the leaders of a single party they were a hopeless combination. One pushed the other into positions he did not fancy, and the other then covered the action or retreat of his colleague as best might be with explanations of which the other colleague had not thought. The party, in the meantime, was tumbling to pieces, not knowing what to think or do. Under either leader it would have done better than it could do under both.

As an illustration as to how duality of leadership embarrasses and breaks up a party, let us take the

Education Bill of 1902 and the Tariff Reform Scheme of 1903.

Chamberlain was wholly averse to the educational changes. Balfour kicked as hard as he could against Tariff Reform. Both schemes in the long run became the policy of the Unionist Party, yet if the party had been individually canvassed upon either set of propositions I am certain that the large majority would have been against both.

Shortly before his death I had an interview with my old chief, Salisbury. He was then a doomed man, but for a short time he spoke to me with his old brilliancy and decision. He was emphatic in his disapproval of dual leadership. He pointed out that it was contrary to the spirit and conception of responsible Parliamentary government, and would bring any party thus conducted to real political disaster. I was fortified and encouraged to find that my old chief's views were identical with my own.

In September the resignations became known, and after a thirty-year tenure of a Front Bench seat in the House of Commons I lapsed into an unofficial unit of insignificance, and there I remained till the dissolution of 1905. I had, however, the satisfaction of remembering that I had held against all comers the same constituency for nearly thirty-eight years (for my later seat was but a section of my original constituency) and that we repelled all attacks within that area, no matter from what quarter they came, until Tariff Reform smashed us. Under our system of party discipline and management a Minister who has left the Cabinet upon a subject which has become the burning question of the day finds himself in an invidious and at times very embarrassing position. If he carries any weight in the country he is at once

beslabbered with praise as a far-seeing statesman by the very newspapers and speakers who had previously tried to make his official existence untenable by criticism and abuse. His aid and co-operation are asked, not so much to further the one question on which he is at variance with his late colleagues as to upset and destroy the Government with whom on other questions he is in accord.

Tariff Reform, in the shape in which it was advocated, made it certain that whenever an appeal to the country on the policy so propagated was made, the Tariff Reformers would be smashed hip and thigh from Dan even to Beersheba. The only possible antidote against this débâcle was to throw out the Unionist administration, but that meant bringing into office a Separatist and Radical Government. Those who agreed with the resigning Ministers (and I believe they constituted, if not a majority of our party, something very like it) found themselves powerless for good. To sit still and do nothing in the House of Commons when votes of censure were moved but at the same time to lay before mixed audiences our fiscal views was the utmost we could do. For some time previous to the general election my friends and I declined to speak anywhere. We found that our action met with such approval at those meetings that we endangered the seats of those we wished to retain.

A distinguished member of the Unionist Party who had been a Lancashire member lost his seat in the political landslide. Meeting him after the election, I expressed my regret at his defeat. He replied, "It is all very well for you to say this, but your speech at Blackburn six months before the election lost us twenty seats in Lancashire alone." I retorted

that I did not put my speaking very high; but if one speech from me could have such an effect, how very poor must be the policy it attacked.

Granting, as I fully did, that our tariff and customs policy required revision and change with the intention of giving us more power in negotiation and bargaining, that system should have been attacked where it was weak and illogical, not where it was strong and popular. Its great merit lay in the fact that it had cheapened food, especially bread, and the wage-earning class had benefited during the last thirty years more by the fall in the price of food than by a rise of wage. To herald to the English proletariat a new policy in the formula that the British Empire would tumble to pieces unless it adopted a preferential tariff and that a preferential tariff meant the taxation of food was to destroy the propaganda almost before it had been enunciated. There was an assailable side in our tariff arrangements and one where an assault would have been effective and successful.

The French Treaty of 1860 negotiated by Cobden was the starting-point and preamble of our subsequent foreign commercial arrangements; but the Treaty of 1860 was not based upon Free Trade but upon the principles of Reciprocity. In the first Parliament of which I was a member this treaty was strongly denounced by the old orthodox Free Traders. They foresaw what it must lead to. A nation who unreservedly adopts the free admission of all foreign products cannot on such a foundation bargain when it has nothing to offer in return. If unlimited Free Trade is to prevail, let us stop pretending to negotiate upon Reciprocity. If Reciprocity is our policy, then let us adjust our customs systems so as to make it

effective. I wanted Chamberlain to take this limited line of advance, but he had become so enamoured with the idea of fostering Colonial wheat that he would not listen to the suggestion. Yet in combination we had made a most successful start upon the foreign sugar duties.

India produced an enormous amount of coarse sugar. Germany and Austria proposed to smash this industry by heavy export sugar bounties and cheap freight to India. Such a policy would have so damaged the sugar production that the whole of India was ready to accept any reasonable protective measure. We proposed countervailing duties just sufficient to counteract the bounties. Our proposals met with unanimous approval in India. In the House of Commons, where Fowler moved an uncompromising Manchester School resolution, we knocked him and his arguments to pieces and obtained a very large majority. Chamberlain argued the question from the Protective side, I from the standpoint of Free Trade. As the result of our counteraction to bounty-fed sugar, the whole system of bounties was greatly modified, and the amount of artificial assistance rendered was largely reduced.

We thus promoted the true cause of free trading in the teeth of the protests of doctrinaires, and it would not have been difficult to secure similarly good results if Tariff Reform had not run amok at the cause of cheap bread. However, the mischief was done, and the Unionist Party suffered three successive heavy defeats in the next three elections.

Now comes the tragedy of the situation. Chamberlain's resilience, audacity, disregard of convention and precedent marked him out as the man the best qualified to get the party out of the mess in which

it found itself. Just at the moment when such a service would have been of inestimable value both to the party and country he was struck down by paralysis. Being above all things a single-handed man, he never had first-class lieutenants, and the poor Unionist Party blundered on, accumulating misfortunes by making mistake after mistake in other directions but still hoisting the detested flag of taxation on bread.

But out of the evil came good. The Unionist Party was not in power when Germany made an attempt to subjugate Europe. If the Unionists had then constituted the Government, would the Radical and Labour Party have given them wholehearted assistance against Germany? The position being reversed, whatever doubts or trepidation existed, they were not to be found in the Unionist Party but in the Pacifist ranks of the Radical Government or their supporters. It was there alone that hesitancy and indecision prevailed. By the fact that the Unionists were in opposition Europe and civilisation were saved, and the Tariff Reformers may put this to the credit of their otherwise disastrous adventure.

CHAPTER XXXV

HOLDING the views I did it seemed clear to me that my duty for the time being was to keep out of Parliament. Things and ideas might so change later on as to give me the legitimate chance of helping my old colleagues and friends without aiding and abetting them in their present untoward course. I had had far more than my fair share of office—thirteen years at the India Office, two in the Education Department and seven at the Admiralty, making with my chairmanship of the London School Board a total of over twenty-three years' official service out of a Parliamentary life of thirty-eight. Still, I was reluctant to dissociate myself wholly from public life, for I felt that I had yet some years of work left in me which might possibly be useful in promoting improvement and reform in spheres of work outside the ambit of purely party politics.

One evening Ritchie said to me, "The Government are about to appoint a Commission to overhaul and reform our system of Poor Law Reform. I am alarmed lest I should be asked to be the Chairman." "Why?" I said. "Because it would be a most stupendous job. There is hardly a detail in our social, industrial and financial life which may not come under its purview. But," he added, "much can be done by classification and otherwise to ameliorate the status of those relieved and to sweep away methods of administration both antiquated and unfair."

Ritchie suddenly died while on a visit to Dudley at Biarritz. His death came as a great surprise. He was a big strong man and showed no sign whatever of failure. I had a very great regard for him. He was somewhat clumsy and tactless in his speeches, and he lacked the benefits of a literary education, but within these limits he was a first-rate man of affairs. His judgment was excellent, his courage unquestioned, and he had singular powers of pushing matters through the House of Commons. He was straightforwardness itself and a most pleasant companion.

It was no doubt owing to his death that I became Chairman of this enquiry, which lasted five years and was by far the heaviest business in which I was ever engaged. Our evidence, oral and written, covered 7,000 pages of printed matter. The composition of the Commission was on the lines of selecting the most prominent advocates known of different and conflicting schools of thought, persons who would have been admirable witnesses but who had preconceived judgment upon many subjects referred to them; The task of keeping them together was very tiring, and at times impossible. Although successive Governments have shied at giving general effect to our sweeping recommendations, they have one by one under pressure of economic and industrial strife been adopted, and no changes whatever have been made contrary to our recommendations.

The general deduction I formed from this exhaustive investigation was that certain classes of the community, especially amongst the lower grades of unskilled labour, had not then obtained their legitimate share of the country's increased prosperity. All the labour disturbances, strikes and commotions

have a common origin—a desire on the part of the wage-earners to have a larger share of the good things of this world than they had previously had, and, in my judgment, their general claim was well founded ; but in trying to meet it we must be very careful not to jeopardise the sources and foundation of their employment. Let us not forget, as has often been said, that the object and incitement of the nineteenth century was to accumulate wealth, whilst the duty of the twentieth century is the far more difficult task of securing its better distribution.

So I made my bow to the Mother of Parliaments, to whose kindly tuition I was so much indebted, and from the vantage-coign of disinterested aloofness I watched for many years her subsequent behaviour. Almost all the evils and ailments of the House of Commons of my day have become deepened and intensified under the increasing pressure of post-war problems. Members are worked threadbare, Ministers are constantly retiring to rest-cures, human flesh and intellect are ground to impotence by the remorseless treadmill of endless attendance and purposeless interrogation. They have neither the time to think nor the requisite vigour to act. The terrific taxation in force (and likely to remain) has knocked out of Parliamentary life its most useful and brilliant member, the ambitious and capable young man of moderate means who was a full-timer. The House of Commons is no longer a place for him ; he must work outside for his livelihood. Devolution and delegation are the only hope of salvation of this over-burdened and exhausted assembly. Wireless telegraphy and transport by air have brought the Mother Country and Oversea Dominions immeasurably nearer to one another. Let us work out our

future upon this knowledge. The governing and administrative functions of the British Parliament must for the future be gradually classified, distributed and organised according to the character of the work to be done—imperial, national and local. The old Parliament of Great Britain will then occupy before the world a less prominent and ubiquitous position, but the weight of its external duties will be greatly lightened by the co-operation of its giant offspring in America, Africa, Australasia and Asia, and so long as the same sense of fair play, justice and humanity animates its actions, the change will be not so much in the character and policy adopted as in the vaster area of its operations and the greater forces behind them.

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